

How English language literature is taught in the Norwegian upper secondary school

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Høgskolen i Hedmark

Master thesis

Master i kultur- og språkfagenes didaktikk

Fordypning i engelsk

HØGSKOLEN I HEDMARK

2010

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor, Anne-Line Graedler for her help, kindness and patience. Thank you for your advice and for not giving up on me even when I seemed to give up on myself!

I am also very grateful to all the teachers who found time to talk to me. Without you and your invaluable experience this project would not be possible.

And I want to thank my mother for always believing in me.

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Norsk sammendrag

Dette prosjektet forsøker å finne ut hvordan engelskspråklig litteratur brukes i norsk videregående skole. Dataene er samlet i form av intervjuer med dem som står midt i dette arbeidet – engelsklærerne, og i form av analyser av offentlige dokumenter og lærebøker. Oppgaven konkluderer med at engelskspråklig litteratur først og fremst brukes som et hjelpemiddel i engelskundervisningen. Læreplanen anerkjenner viktigheten av litteratur, men litteraturens hovedfunksjon er å gi elevene eksempler på engelsk språkbruk, og å gi dem kunnskap om kulturen og livet i den engelskspråklige verden. Litteratur er ikke engelskfagets innhold, selv om det er en vesentlig bestanddel som har blitt viktigere i Kunnskapsløftet, sammenliknet med den forrige læreplanen. Kommunikativ kompetanse og kulturell bevissthet er hovedmålene for faget. Litterær kompetanse er noe elevene kan oppnå gjennom å eksponeres for litterære tekster, men det er ikke et krav.

Engelsk sammendrag (abstract)

This project attempts to investigate how English language literature is used in Norwegian upper secondary school. Data were gathered from interviews with those who are faced with the task of carrying out the job – the English teachers, and from an analysis of official documents and textbooks. The report concludes that English language literature is viewed first and foremost as an aid in the teaching of English. The curriculum acknowledges the importance of literature, but its main function is to give students examples of English in use and to give them ideas about culture and the way of life in the English-speaking world. Literature does not constitute the content of the course, although it is an integral part which has gained more importance in the Knowledge Promotion, compared to the previous curriculum. Communicative competence and cultural awareness are the main aims of the course. Literary competence is something which students can acquire from being exposed to literary texts, but which is not obligatory.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and research question

The aim of my project is to find out how English language literature is used in the English lessons in the Norwegian school. This topic grew, first of all, out of my personal interest: I was trained and worked as an English teacher in Ukraine, so I would like to find out more about Norwegian teachers' overall attitude towards the use of literary works in the English classroom.

While the status of English as a foreign or a second language can be discussed in Norway (e.g., Simensen, 2000), in Ukraine English is considered to be a foreign language. This is reflected in the way English is presented in the national curriculum; along with German, French or Spanish. It is not singled out from other languages, although many children choose to learn English. In Norway English is a school subject in its own right, and is obligatory for all students from year 1, as opposed to other foreign languages, which are optional.

The situation is the other way around with literature: in Ukraine it is taught as a separate school subject (in the sense of creative writing of recognized artistic value), which comprises works of writers from all over the world. In Norway literature is not taught separately, but is an integral part of a language subject. Therefore, in Norway English literature is read and taught in the target language. The differences in the status of both English and literature as school subjects in the two countries must have some implications on the way these subjects are taught in school. Therefore my main research question is how English language literature is taught in the Norwegian school.

1.2 The rationale for reading literature in English

Literature is a very versatile subject and may be considered to be one of the most difficult subjects to teach. The idea in literature teaching is not just to get an answer from a student; it is to get a thoroughly thought out and creative answer. In this case the job of the teacher seems to be not simply to transfer knowledge to students, but to lead them to become

competent readers. I think that effective reading of literary texts involves personal evaluation of the works read, openness to the reactions of others and the ability to question what others say and think. Communicating about literature can be a very natural way of communication in English, which has the potential to contribute to developing both the communicative and the linguistic competence of students.

The role and function of literature in the teaching of English as a foreign language (henceforth EFL teaching) has changed over time according to the teaching method dominating at the moment. With the grammar-translation method literature teaching was based on the reading of established and acknowledged texts, which represented both examples of good writing and of the grammar rules of the English language. Reading was accompanied by translation from English into the mother tongue, rarely by discussion of what had been read. During the period of structuralism and at the beginning of the communicative approach movement, literature became irrelevant, since the focus was either on the structures of the language or on pragmatic communication.

With communicative approaches dominating EFL teaching, the interest in literature as one of the resources for language learning was revived. According to Stephen Krashen's acquisition-learning hypothesis, there are two independent ways in which we develop our linguistic skills: acquisition and learning. Acquisition of language is a subconscious process of which the individual is not aware. We acquire our mother tongue. Learning is a conscious process which we usually experience in school and which involves formal instruction. The process of learning could be facilitated by immersing a learner into the target language environment. Wiland (2000) writes: "Next to living in the target language environment, extensive reading of literature combined with good language models in the classroom can give an acquisition situation in the school context" (p. 89).

The reasons for using literature in EFL teaching can be distinguished according to its practical value and its motivating and educating potential. As has already been mentioned, literature encourages language acquisition. First of all, literary texts give examples of good usage of English, which is a very practical reason, since learners are supposed to learn to speak and write correctly. Literary texts also offer a wide range of styles, registers, and different types of texts. By reading them, learners can expand their language awareness and become more susceptible to different features of English.

Secondly, literature also provides learners with access to the cultural background of the people whose language they learn, since literary texts tell us something about other people's social background, their thoughts and ideas. The characters of the texts are not real people, but they are created by real people: "It is true that the 'world' of a novel, play or short story is a created one, yet it offers a full and vivid context in which characters from many social backgrounds can be depicted. A reader can discover their thoughts, feelings, customs, possessions: what they buy, believe in, fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave behind closed doors" (Collie & Spatter, 1987, quoted in Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000: p. 9). In this sense literature is very convenient for EFL teaching since it presents examples of good writing and provides learners with the insight into both the culture and society of English-speaking countries.

Yet another reason for using literature is that it has the potential to motivate students in different ways. First of all, different literary texts bring up different themes which evoke different reactions and interpretations, which can be discussed in class. Lazar (1993) notes: "If the materials are carefully chosen, students will feel that what they do in the classroom is relevant and meaningful to their own lives" (p. 15). In this case learners can bring their personal response from their own experience to the themes of literary texts. All this can motivate them to read and discuss literary texts in the classroom, in other words to communicate with each other in a more or less authentic situation. But in order to respond to a literary text, a learner has to have some feelings about it.

Aesthetics (from the Greek *aisthetikos*, "to perceive-feel-sense"), is the study of the nature of sensation. Aesthetics is also a branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of beauty, art and taste, and with the creation and appreciation of beauty. Two aspects are very important when it comes to teaching literature: to feel or perceive and to appreciate what one reads. Brumfit and Carter (1986) claim that feelings or "intuitive responses" to a text are central to the process of reading literature, because they set up a starting point for investigation of what a text means to us and what we feel about it. Constant exposure to and reading of literature raises the intuitive awareness of learners, but the problem with non-native speakers is that they have to have a certain amount of linguistic competence before they will be able to respond to literary texts, which is why "exposure may serve only the most able and linguistically proficient students" (Brumfit & Carter, 1986: 3). Although this claim may be

discussed (see, for example, Wiland, 2000), it gives grounds for consideration about how literature can be used in EFL teaching with the best possible effect.

As mentioned above, linguistic competence is important for reading and understanding literature. But when it comes to the appreciation of literary text one has to be aware what is supposed to be understood and appreciated, therefore it is reasonable to speak about literary competence as well:

[...] teachers need to make provision for sensitizing students or, to put it another way, developing in them the necessary literary competence to be sensitive to the kinds of styles, forms, conventions, symbolization etc. which a writer communicating in the Western European English-medium literary tradition would assume his or her readers were acquainted with and to which they might be expected to respond accordingly. These are effectively strategies of reading, but they form a component of a culture-specific set of norms and expectations which often need to be explicitly taught in the development of literary competence (Brumfit & Carter, 1986: 18).

Integrating literature into EFL teaching also has the potential of educating the whole person:

Literature may have a wider educational function in the classroom in that it can help to stimulate the imagination of our students, to develop their critical abilities and to increase their emotional awareness. If we ask our students to respond personally to the texts we give them, they will become increasingly confident about expressing their own ideas and emotions in English. They will feel empowered by their ability to grapple with the text and its language, and to relate it to the values and traditions of their own society (Lazar, 1993: 19).

In the view of the aforesaid, I would like to find out about the reasons for using English language literature in Norwegian school. The main focus of my project will be on English teachers. In order to narrow down the scope of my research, I want to concentrate on upper secondary school since I believe upper secondary students have enough linguistic competence to be able to read and work on a more advanced level than, for example, students of lower secondary school. I want to learn more about the approaches to literature teaching which English teachers adopt and what kind of work with literary texts they think their students should do in order to develop both linguistic and literary competence.

1.3 General reading skills: potential and problems

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) has shown that Norwegian students do not read as well as would be desirable, and that they read less in their leisure time than students in many other European countries. This resulted in the launch in 2003 of the Norwegian Government's strategic plan to stimulate a love of reading and reading skills, "Make Space for Reading!" This program is concerned with reading in general. Another implication of the PISA research is that being able to read has become one of four basic skills to be developed in school according to the national curriculum The Knowledge Promotion from 2006 (henceforth LK06).

In order to read effectively and productively one has to be a good strategic reader. Good readers do not necessarily read every word carefully. To be a good reader means to read with a purpose, using different reading strategies, like skimming, scanning or studying according to this purpose. These strategies can be applied both in native and foreign language reading. Glenn Ole Hellekjær (2009) revealed that Norwegian students do not use skimming or scanning when reading English texts. Instead, they read a text thoroughly, trying to understand every word – the way they read textbooks (Hellekjær, 2009). He concludes that in order to develop reading strategies, they have to be explained to and trained with the students. He also urges teachers to use other texts than only from the textbooks, and these texts should be interesting to students: the most important thing is that the students read as much as possible.

PISA studies also revealed that Norwegian boys are less interested in reading than girls. However, research conducted by the University College in Vestfold shows that boys and girls actually read all the time, with the difference that boys like to read something they are really interested in (Jakobsen, 2010). This shows that the concept of reading is usually associated with reading fine literature. When boys read something else, such as texts on the Internet, they do not think they are actually involved in reading.

It is true that new technologies, such as the Internet or even mobile phones, have made written texts more available, and due to this fact people may well be reading more than ever before. But some researchers believe that this is a different kind of reading, which may have changed our reading habits. Nicholas Carr (2008), an American writer who has published

books and articles on technology and culture, writes in his article “Is Google Making Us Stupid?”:

I’m not thinking the way I used to think. I can feel it most strongly when I’m reading. Immersing myself in a book or a lengthy article used to be easy. My mind would get caught up in the narrative or the turns of the argument, and I’d spend hours strolling through long stretches of prose. That’s rarely the case anymore. Now my concentration often starts to drift after two or three pages. I get fidgety, lose the thread, begin looking for something else to do. I feel as if I’m always dragging my wayward brain back to the text. The deep reading that used to come naturally has become a struggle (Carr, 2008).

Carr is convinced that the sporadic nature of reading on-line, attributed to the use of hypertext, has changed the way people read from being linear to becoming more associative. Reading extensively for longer periods of time is very problematic because our mind is becoming used to and in fact “wants to” be distracted.

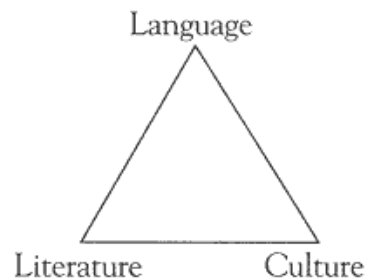
As has already been mentioned, extensive reading of literature has the potential to contribute to English language acquisition. But extensive reading presupposes the presence of a reading desire and the development of reading skills, which might be problematic in the Norwegian school, as evidenced by the research mentioned above. New technologies, which in many ways can facilitate the learning process, may also conceal challenges for both teachers and students. With so many different sources of information and net-based communication the attention of young people may be drawn away from reading. As a part of my project, it is interesting to investigate this problem with the focus on English language literature within the confines of the classroom. Since my research question is rather broad, I will not concentrate on reading skills as such. But students’ reading activities are important for literature teaching, so I think it is relevant to find out what the attitude of English teachers in Norway is to the problem of reading. Does the possible lack of interest in reading affect their work and their students’ progress in any way? Do they see any possible solution? How do they motivate their students for reading?

1.4 The place and status of literature in the EFL curriculum

As has already been noted, literature is not singled out as a separate subject in the Norwegian curriculum; it is seen as an integral part of language teaching and learning – both

in Norwegian and in English. The most important aspect for me with regards to the curriculum is to find out what status English language literature actually possesses in the overall structure of EFL teaching.

Carmen Chaves Tesser (1995) has suggested a foreign language curriculum model which consists of three parts:



She explains that *Language* in this model refers to language as a system as proposed by Kramsch and M.A.K. Halliday. She places language at the top of the triangle because “without thorough knowledge of communication, one can hardly begin to understand the context of that communication” (Chaves Tesser, 1995). *Literature* refers to the written, filmed or performed record of a particular group of people, which includes both high-culture literary texts and more popular works. *Culture* refers to social codes which define this group’s ideology, beliefs, and values. Chaves Tesser says that all the components must be present in the curriculum for the model to function properly. The absence of one of these components means that a curriculum is incomplete, because the components are interconnected: “[...] language affects culture, which affects literature, which affects language” (Chaves Tesser, 1995).

According to Chaves Tesser’s model, a foreign language curriculum should include both literature and culture, which are seen as integral parts of the course. I would like to find out how the current English subject curriculum in Norway states the position of English language literature in EFL teaching. It also seems to be reasonable to compare the LK06 English subject curriculum with the previous one, from Reform 1994, and see what the differences are between them. I would also like to find out the teachers’ opinion on this, since the Knowledge Promotion is the most recent reform of the Norwegian school system, fully implemented in 2009. The relevant questions are: How does the new curriculum affect the teachers’ work with regard to literature? How much space do the teachers think is given to literature? I will also look at two English textbooks in order to find out how the

curriculum guidelines are carried out in them. Another reason for the textbook analysis is that the teachers I interviewed use them in their work.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

In Chapter 2, I present the theoretical background of my project, which is the theory of EFL teaching in general, with a special focus on the *what*, *how* and *why* of literature: what to read, how to read, and why read at all, in order to acquire the language.

Chapter 3 presents my research method. My research is qualitative in nature, and involves an interpretive approach to my subject matter, which consists of such diverse empirical materials as: personal experience, interviews with teachers, and analysis of official documents.

Chapters 4 and 5 contain my analyses of the two most recent English subject curricula from 1994 and 2006, of the two textbooks used by my teacher interviewees, and of my interviews with the teachers, while in Chapter 6 I discuss my findings and develop my understanding of the subject which I set out to investigate.

Chapter 7 contains a brief summary and conclusions.

2. Theoretical background: literature in EFL teaching

In the present chapter I focus on the theoretical background of my project. First of all, I discuss the ambiguity of the term *English literature* and possible problems one can encounter using it. I also discuss some problems connected to the main objects of literary studies, namely, texts. Next, I will look at the most significant theories of EFL teaching, and approaches to using literature in EFL teaching. In addition to this, possible criteria for the selection of texts are presented. I also touch upon the relationship between literature and language: is literary language a variety of English? Finally, I consider different theories of literature teaching with a focus on the organization of classroom work and various kinds of oral and written activities.

2.1 English literature?

One of the reasons for the ambiguity of the term *English literature* is the word *literature*: does this mean everything written (literally translated, the word means “acquaintance with letters”, from Latin *littera* “letter”) or only established and acknowledged texts? The word clearly has different meanings depending on who is using it. It could be applied broadly to mean any symbolic record, encompassing everything from images and sculptures to letters. People may perceive a difference between literature and some popular forms of written work. Why do we consider some texts as literary while others remain non-literary discourse?

If we asked people fifty years ago what English literature was, the answer would probably be something like “literature written in English by an author from the UK” and it might start with names like Shakespeare, Lord Byron, and so on. The present situation is somewhat different: many writers who are not from the United Kingdom write in English. Should we consider their works English literature or should we coin another term? Does “English” mean the English language or, maybe, English nationality? If it means the language, what about the numerous varieties of English? Does a fixed domain of English literature exist today?

Another aspect of the ambiguity is the status of English as an international language; English literature is as diverse as the varieties and dialects of English spoken around the world. But if we use the term *English literature*, does not it mean that we automatically exclude, for example, American, Australian or Canadian literature?

One of the groups affected by this ambiguity is the school teachers. Whereas in academia, the term often labels departments and programs practicing English studies, it is not quite clear what kind of English literature they should teach in school

I will use the term *English language literature*, where *English language* relates to different varieties of English: British, American, Australian, Canadian, etc., and *literature* refers to the “catalogued record (written, filmed, or performed) of a particular group of people. The category includes not only traditional high-culture literary texts but also more popular works” (Chaves Tesser, 1995).

2.2 Texts

As we have seen, the use of the both of the terms *English literature* and *literature* can be quite problematic, but the problems do not end there: the notion of *text* – the main subject of literary studies – can have a range of different meanings and interpretations.

The word *text*, as many other words, has changed its meaning over time and it can mean different things to different people. The most common meaning of the word is “a written or printed work regarded in terms of content rather than form” (Text, s.a.). *Text* is also a technical term in different linguistic theories. For linguists text can be written or spoken.

As for specific theories of literature, they are distinguished not only by their methods and conclusions, but also by how they define a text. For some theoreticians *texts* are books belonging to the canon – a group of literary works that are generally accepted as representing a field (for example, the Western literary canon), while in cultural studies the notion of text has been extended to “all practices which signify”, i.e. “the generation of meaning through images, sounds, objects (such as clothes) and activities (like dance and sports)” (Barker, 2006; p. 10). Marxist literary criticism, for example, distinguishes between

progressive and non-progressive texts. Progressive texts are those which contribute to social change; non-progressive texts are those which do not (Durant, Fabb, 1990).

In accordance with the inclusive understanding of the term *literature* which I have adopted in this project, I will use the term *text* as it is used in the field of cultural studies. The English subject curriculum for the Norwegian school speaks not only about “literature”, but also about “other cultural expressions” (English subject curriculum, 2006)

English language literature does not have the status of an independent school subject in Norway; it is an inseparable part of EFL teaching. For this reason I am going to present the approach which nowadays shapes most of the foreign language teaching in Norway (Simensen, 2000) – the communicative approach.

2.3 The Communicative Approach

Those methods which can be united under the heading “the communicative approach” equip learners with necessary communicative skills. The title itself suggests the main goal and content of the approach: communication.

Communicative language teaching makes use of real-life or simulated real-life situations in order to promote effective language use. The teacher sets up a situation that is likely to occur in real life and encourages the students to perform a task. The target language is ideally used for all classroom interaction, the classroom itself being a real-life situation in which effective communication takes place. The students are encouraged to ask questions, interact with each other and take control of activities to reach their own learning outcomes. Learning is seen as the responsibility of the learner, and the teachers talk less and listen more than in a traditional classroom. In the communicative approach, language is seen as a tool for interaction – it is not simply a subject for academic study and analysis. The students look at the use of language both from a linguistic point of view (grammar, lexis, collocation, etc.) and from a social or situational point of view (who is speaking, why they are speaking, what is appropriate in the context, etc.). In order to meet real language the students are encouraged to read texts which represent linguistic and cultural variety, i.e. news articles, interviews, and pop-culture lyrics along with canonical works (Simensen, 1998).

Literature is not studied for its own sake, it is used for a specific purpose: to give students an idea of how real English works. This is why Lazar (1993) in his guide for teachers and trainers distinguishes between the study of literature and the use of literature. When studying literature, literature is the main content of the course and the development of the students' literary competence is the aim. In contrast, if literature is used as a resource, the aim is to develop linguistic competence by reading various types of literary text which provide the basis for linguistic activities. But even in this case reading literature may contribute to acquiring literary competence through the exposure to literary texts.

2.4 Approaches to using literature in EFL teaching

Lazar (1993) suggests three approaches to using literature as a resource in the English language classroom. However, he notes that his categorization is an idealized version of what can actually take place in the classroom. In reality, these approaches may be blended into a mixture of methods.

2.4.1 A language-based approach

The prime intention of this approach is first of all to teach language, not literature. The advocates of this approach believe that the integration of literature into a language classroom will help to improve the students' knowledge of English. The use of literature within this approach can vary: literature can be used for language practice, because literary texts provide the material for language activities. The themes of literary texts can be interesting for students and thus provide a good starting point for discussions. At the same time the themes give insights into other people's lives.

Littlewood (1986) in his article "Literature in the School Foreign-Language course" suggests five levels of work with literature with regards to language: language as a system of structures, language in a specific stylistic variety, language as the expression of superficial subject matter, language as the symbolization of the author's vision, and the fifth level is when a literary work is viewed as a part of literary history or the author's biography. He then discusses five perspectives on the use of literature in language teaching regarding the five levels mentioned above.

The first perspective is relevant in the earliest stages of language learning. Literature provides examples of language structures in use and the basis for various linguistic activities. These language structures can be transferred into the learners' active vocabulary. The second perspective is appropriate in a later stage of learning, when learners have a better command of English and can sense differences in language use. Literature gives examples of stylistic varieties. The fourth perspective is concerned with a created world of literary texts and presents a transition from receptive to productive skills. Here the focus shifts from language and its structures to literature itself. Situations and characters of fictional texts help to create an authentic situation for language use. Moreover, literary texts tell stories of other people's lives: "The world created in the work of literature is the foreign world, and literature is thus the way of assimilating [...] knowledge of this foreign world, and of the view of reality which its native speakers take for granted when communicating with each other" (Littlewood, 1986; 179). The fourth perspective is concerned with understanding the author's vision and underlying themes in a work of literature. At this level students learn to analyze and generalize what they have read in a literary text. In the last stage students learn how to place literature in the context of the foreign culture and literary history in general.

In this approach texts and materials are chosen mainly for their linguistic and stylistic appropriateness for students, but their literary qualities are also taken into consideration.

2.4.2 Literature as content of the course

Lazar (1993) admits that this approach is more appropriate for tertiary education, because the main focus here is on literary movements, the historical aspect of literature, biographies of authors and their relevance to the message of the texts, literary genres, etc. In this approach more focus is on literature than on language, but some of the elements of this approach can be used in the language class. Students read texts and literary criticism and thus acquire the relevant language through exposure. Their mother tongue can be frequently used to discuss the texts, or they can be asked to translate texts from one language into the other. In order to improve their understanding of literature, a teacher can provide students with background information like biographical information about the author, the historical, political or social background which may be crucial to understanding the text's message, or distinct features of the author's style. The kind and amount of information which should be

given to students depend on such factors as the students' level of proficiency, their interests, or the appropriateness of the background information to the text.

Materials and texts are chosen according to their importance to the literary canon and tradition.

2.4.3 Literature for personal enrichment

In this approach students are encouraged to draw on their personal experiences and give their responses to literary texts, thereby becoming more actively involved in the classroom activities, and responding emotionally to different topics brought up by literary texts. This approach is mostly appropriate for students who are particularly interested in literature and have a very good command of English.

In order to evoke a personal response from the students, a teacher has to select texts that are interesting to them. This task can be very difficult because not all students are equally interested in literature. Besides, it is very rare that all the students are on the same level language-wise. At the same time, this approach involves students, since they have an opportunity to decide what kind of texts they will read. However, students may become highly dependent on their teacher, who will have to assist the class with explanations and interpretations, without which a personal response from students may be impossible. All this means that this approach demands much planning, explanation and supervision from the teacher.

Texts are chosen on the basis of the students' interests. A teacher can ask the students about what they would like to read, or make a list of books to choose from, or make questionnaires in order to find out what kind of literature the students usually read on their own. These texts may be placed alongside factual materials about the same topic.

2.5 Selection of texts

Syllabus is the basis for any literature teaching. There are four models of organizing materials (Wiland 2000) which have been and are still used not only at school level, but also

at colleges and in universities. They have also been used in the Norwegian school at different stages of its development, and for particular reasons.

2.5.1 The history of literature model

The basis of this model is knowledge about the authors and literary periods. This kind of knowledge mainly consists of facts about different literary periods, important names and figures which students are supposed to learn. As Wiland (2000) notes, this type of model has little or no potential for language learning and communication, therefore it was abandoned by the Norwegian educational system a long time ago. However, this does not mean that students do not have to obtain the basic facts about the history of literature, but the amount of this knowledge can vary.

2.5.2 The canon model

This type of model is based on a representative or canonical selection of texts. The selection is decided by the central educational authorities. The students are supposed to read the selected texts, and their knowledge will be tested with an exam at the end of the course. Wiland (2000) writes that the selection itself can be debated, but “[...] the principle that students are rewarded at their examination for having worked well with set texts implies an essential pedagogical truth” (p. 84). This model is mostly used at universities and colleges where literature is taught. The danger of the model is that it encourages rote learning of established opinions and has little potential for developing the students` own appreciation and joy of reading.

2.5.3 The Breadth model

Wiland (2000) notes that this model can be regarded as a variant of the canon model, because it also involves a list of suggested texts to be read. The main difference is that this list is considerably longer, but it is not obligatory. The students are supposed to read extensively, but the detailed analysis of texts is not required. Their knowledge will be tested during an exam where examination questions are very open, giving the students an opportunity to show their understanding of the texts and the ability to compare them.

2.5.4 The Depth model

A deep and detailed analysis of a text is the main feature of this model. The students are taught to analyze and discuss the content of the text and to examine the language forms.

In terms of EFL teaching, each of the four models has its advantages and disadvantages, but Wiland (2000) suggests that the optimal solution for EFL teaching is to combine the breadth and the depth models, because they complement and deepen each other. Students of upper secondary school can encounter difficulties with authentic English language, but Wiland (2000) defends the approach saying: “‘Roughly tuned’ language input through wide reading of literature has been accepted as a viable means to *acquire* a foreign language” (p. 87).

2.5.5 Other criteria for text selection

If a teacher is not bound to a certain syllabus, or a syllabus allows a teacher to substitute texts, there are three main areas which he or she has to take into consideration: the type of course, the type of students, and certain factors connected with the texts. In this section I will discuss the criteria the text selection suggested by Lazar (1993).

First of all a teacher has to consider the level of the students and their reasons for learning English. He or she also has to think about the subject curriculum and how flexible it is. Another aspect is how literary texts can contribute to achieving the aims of the subject. It is also important to decide what genres are more suitable: short stories, novel excerpts, extracts from plays or maybe poems?

The criteria concerned with students are their age, emotional and intellectual maturity, and interests. These criteria may be rather difficult to apply to every student in a class, because such factors as interests and maturity can vary considerably, which is why a teacher should aim at the majority of the classroom. Lazar (1993) also suggest three other criteria which he thinks may seem more complicated compared to those mentioned above: the students’ cultural background, their linguistic proficiency and their literary background.

The students’ cultural background may either help or hinder them in understanding a literary text. For example, texts which narrate events very remote in time and place may perplex the students. The teacher should consider whether a text needs additional explanations with regard to its background so that the students understand its message. On the other hand, such

texts may still appeal to the students because they contain topics interesting to the students, such as conflicts between young people or relationships between fathers and sons.

Teachers should also select texts with regard to their students' linguistic proficiency. If a text contains too many archaisms, stylistic devices, or dialect forms and words from a professional register, students might find it highly difficult to cope with such a text if their linguistic competence is not quite advanced.

Lazar (1993) notes that there is a certain correlation between students' literary background and their linguistic proficiency: if students read extensively in their native language, they may have acquired a certain amount of literary competence which can be applied to the English language literature and help them understand literary texts even if their English is not sufficient. On the other hand, if the students' knowledge of English is good enough, but they do not have the literary competence, they can understand the meaning of the words, but literary meanings will stay hidden for them. This is why it is important to look at the literary qualities of the text and decide whether students will be able to interpret its literary meanings.

2.6 Literary competence

Usually EFL teaching is focused on the development of linguistic competence, which is basically awareness of grammar and the ability to use English according to the grammar rules in various situations. This competence is developed by learning grammar and being exposed to English in the form of various texts. On the other hand, reading literary texts may contribute to the development of literary competence.

The notion of literary competence was suggested by researchers like Culler (1975) and Brumfit and Carter (1986), who argued that those who read extensively develop some kind literary competence, a kind of "grammar of literature", by which they basically understand certain conventions which allow a competent reader to convert the words on the page into literary meanings. He or she knows how a literary text should be read and understood. A novice reader might be confused by, for example, the language of poems, where much of the structures and the lexical items are deviant from the norm of language use students are exposed to from the very beginning. However, if he or she has had the necessary exposure to

patterns of literary language the confusion will probably not occur. Coenen (1992) provides the following definition:

A reader who is literary competent is able to communicate with and about literature. The content of this communication may be varied, but at least shows that the reader is able to construct coherence. This might regard coherence within a text to enhance comprehension and interpretation, describing similarity and variation between texts, relating text and world, relating personal judgment about the literary work to that of other readers. The literary competent reader's attitude to literature is defined by a certain willingness to invest in reading and a certain open mind regarding to deviant perspectives and frames of reference (Coenen, 1992: 73, quoted in Witte, Janssen & Rijlaarsdam, 2006:5).

Literary competence, then, includes a number of conventions which operate for different genres. Developing literary competence means developing skills which help students to deal with literary texts. What these conventions and skills are, is difficult to define, but Lazar (1993) suggests that teachers can decide for themselves what skills they think are important to develop. Defining these skills will enable teachers to plan their lessons and materials better.

Among skills which are reasonable to develop may be the ability to recognize and decode figures of speech such as metaphor and simile. Students may also learn about narrative and poetic devices such as plot, story, character, point-of-view, setting; assonance, alliteration, rhyme and rhythm. They have to be able to recognize specific text features such as theme and style, and distinguish between literary genres such as novel, play, short-story and poem. As a result they should be able to use literary notions in order to interpret the text and to produce a personal response to the text. The meta-language to which the above-mentioned terms belong provides students with tools for identifying, interpreting and appreciating the value of the distinctive features in a literary text. Besides, the learners feel more secure about expressing personal opinions about the text if they master the appropriate language. To what extent teachers want to develop their students' literary competence depends on the purpose for which literature is being used.

2.7 Literary language or language of literature?

Does the English language which students encounter when reading various types of factual prose differ in any way from the language of literary texts? We may assume that students will notice special or unusual use of English in literature. Can we speak about a literary language and specific ways of teaching it?

Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) insist that literary English and English learners' inter-language are both varieties of English. Other theorists believe that there is no such thing as a literary language (Brumfit and Carter, 1986; Simpson, 1997). "That is to say, there are not items of modern English vocabulary or grammar that are inherently and exclusively literary. It is impossible to identify or isolate any linguistic feature that will automatically confer a 'literary' status on a text. In short, the concept of 'literary language' is a chimera" (Simpson, 1997: 7).

We cannot talk about the language of literature in the same way as, for example, the language of law or medicine. However, it is possible to say that language may be used in ways that can be characterized as literary (Brumfit and Carter, 1986). Moreover, some researchers suggest that it is possible to isolate a number of features of literary language, especially when it comes to the language of poetry which employs such expressive devices as metaphor, simile, assonance, alliteration, etc., but the same devices can occur in other forms of discourse.

What is distinctive about literature is that "literary text is almost the only 'context' where different varieties of language can be mixed and still admitted. Any deviation from norms of lexis and syntax in legal documents would be inadmissible [...] any non-literary linguistic form can be pressed into literary service. Writers will exclude no language from a literary function" (Brumfit and Carter, 1986: 8-9).

Thus literature is not a variety of language in itself, but it presents examples of how linguistic features may be used in a peculiar way. Therefore it seems to be reasonable to look at the language of literary texts more closely and, for example, contrast it with other forms of discourse so that students become aware of a wide range of styles in English and various purposes for which these styles can be used.

2.8 Theories of literature teaching

Showalter (2003) distinguishes between three main theories of literature teaching: subject-centered, teacher-centered and student-centered, each of them emphasizing different aspects of the teaching process.

2.8.1 Subject-centered theories

Subject-centered theories emphasize content and information, often presented as the “correct” answer. This theory is also called “the banking model” of education (Friere, cited in Showalter, 2003) or the “transmission” theory of teaching, because the main concern of this model is to transfer knowledge of the material from the teacher to the students. The main focus is on what is taught. As Showalter (2003) notes, all subjects and courses are subject- and content-centered to some degree, as teachers are supposed to know everything about their fields.

2.8.2 Teachers-centered theories

This kind of theories focuses on what the teacher must do or be in order to facilitate education. Teaching here can be seen as the process of performance or as a spiritual journey. (Showalter, 2003) As the teacher is in the center of this model, his or her intellectual, speaking and acting abilities are very important. But the danger of this theory lies in a potential monopolization of classroom activities by the teacher. Though the performance is very important, it must be carefully thought out and planned in order not to overshadow the students` activities, which are, after all, the most important aspect of teaching.

2.8.3 Student-centered theories

Student-centered theories focus on the way students learn and the organization of the classroom process to maximize active learning. It emphasizes the student rather than the teacher. The students are not exposed to great canonical works; the teacher does not present the background information and models of the literary analysis which students have to learn; instead, the students confront the text directly, working actively and collaboratively. In order to make the process of learning more effective or productive, the teacher has to think about how students learn and how to help them learn better, i.e. the teacher has to facilitate the process.

2.8.4 Eclectic theories

Showalter (2003) writes: "...probably the most widespread theory of teaching literature is having no theory at all, and trying to make use of whatever will do the job". In fact, what happens in classrooms cannot be explained by a finite number of methods, because there are many variables which can affect the process, and some of them can actually go beyond literary theory (Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000).

Some theories suggest how the content can be organized; others give the teachers an idea of how to conduct a lesson. These two aspects of literature teaching are closely connected, as the success of the students depends on both the syllabus and the teacher and his or her methods.

2.9 What can we do with literature?¹

Traditionally, teaching literature means teaching the major literary forms: poetry, short stories, novels and drama, and their distinct features. The teaching of poetry is concerned with phonological regularity, which comprises the traditional categories of rhyme, assonance, alliteration and metre. While studying short stories, students get to know about the notions of narrative and the narrator, different types of narrator, the presentation of speech and thought, character, and the organization of time in literary narratives. Novels present particular challenges for both the teacher and the student: the major structural obstacle is their length. Drama provides the students with insight into how speech works in drama and how it may be related to non-literary speech patterns and functions. All these major forms should therefore be presented in the syllabus in order to provide students with examples of literary conventions, which can in turn help them to become competent readers.

In the following section I will present different kinds of activities which can take place during the English language literature lessons, as classified by Parkinson and Reid Thomas

¹ There are many books and teacher's guides which suggest types of work that can be done in class, e.g. Ibsen and Wiland (2000); Duff and Maley (1990); Simpson (1997); Peck (1995). I chose to use the classification suggested by Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) for practical reasons, as it gives a general idea about what can be done with literature.

(2000). Some of them are more traditional, while others are more innovative and can be seen as alternative activities. I start with the traditional ones.

2.9.1 Rote learning and summary of content

This kind of activities may include learning the basic plot of novels or plays, or facts about the writer's life, relevant history and politics. At school level this can simply be the memorization of facts given by the teacher. Rote learning perfectly suits the history of literature model of teaching, as the main focus is on the learning of facts. Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) note that rote learning and summary of content can be distinct kinds of activities, but in practice they often go together, because the students are only expected to demonstrate enough factual knowledge to be successful in the subject.

2.9.2 Reading aloud

Some teachers tend to dismiss this method as unproductive and expect their students to read all texts at home or silently in class. The method does not develop such reading strategies as gist extraction, rereading short sections to confirm meaning, or skipping some passages. It can hardly be used very often for studying long texts, but it is suitable for poetry and drama. Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) defend this method as necessary because it is a specialist skill – some people do it badly even in their mother tongue, while reading aloud in a foreign language has actually helped many people to learn it to advanced levels. The teachers, nevertheless, have to be very conscious about using reading aloud as a classroom activity: different problems can arise, such as incorrect pronunciation of words which can divert the attention of the students from the text. Teacher can sometimes read the text to the students themselves, or even use tapes of other competent speakers.

2.9.3 Translation

Translation relates to activities in which a class goes through a book, translating the whole text or selected passages sentence by sentence. This type of activity is often combined with reading aloud. There are two possible variants of this activity: the teacher does most of the translation, or the students work on translation, and the teacher checks its quality afterwards or the product is read aloud to the class.

Translation is sometimes seen as unnecessary or insufficient: good readers do not translate a foreign language text, even in their heads; they understand it directly. Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) agree that translation is not an optimal variant for learning language, but in itself it is an “add-on skill” which those already proficient in a foreign language can develop for very specific purposes. Moreover, it can be very useful in situations when students have to study foreign-language literature without adequate prior knowledge of the language.

2.9.4 Reworking of secondary literature

Secondary literature involves working with generalization, analysis, synthesis, interpretation or evaluation of the original texts. It is difficult to make any generalizations about this type of activity, because the content of the secondary literature used in school can vary: it can be historical and bibliographical facts, scholarly findings on text variants, or even received opinions which the students are expected to memorize. On the one hand it can hinder the students from developing their own opinions of the primary texts, but on the other hand, it can assist them in other activities such as writing about primary texts.

2.9.5 Practical criticism

This term is associated with the names of I.A. Richards and F.R. Leavis, who rejected the importance of received knowledge about literature. They claimed that a reader had to be given a text as it is without any background information, and to understand or interpret it by means of clues which were given in the text itself (Durant & Fabb, 1990).

In terms of classroom activities, practical criticism usually means that students are required to give response to a text which is previously unknown, using their own ideas more than in the other kinds of activities discussed above. Sometimes this approach is believed to be aesthetically or literarily biased because the students are supposed to share the tastes and values of their tutor (Parkinson and Reid Thomas, 2000). But when used in an unbiased way, it can contribute to the process of opinion making.

The following activities are less traditional than those discussed above and they perfectly suit the ideas of the communicative approach, which nowadays shapes most of the foreign language teaching in Norway (Simensen, 2000). They are not necessarily better than

traditional classroom activities, but they can widen the foreign language teachers` repertoire and facilitate the process of learning.

2.9.6 Reading for pleasure

Though there is no conclusive research evidence (Parkinson and Reid Thomas, 2000), many experienced teachers can confirm that those students who read extensively and far beyond what is directly taught and tested, improve their language skills, including speaking, in comparison with those who do not.

To encourage foreign language learners to read more, many EFL publishers produce “graded readers”, some abridged and simplified, some only abridged. Some teachers, however, do not like the idea that authentic material has been re-worked and prefer to keep literary texts unsimplified and to use naturally simple material such as children`s literature. Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) suggest that it is better to encourage students to find texts which interest them – not generally simplified, but not “high” literature either, because the main concern is the reader`s personal enthusiasm.

2.9.7 Reading solely as foreign language practice

This kind of activity usually involves looking up unknown vocabulary while studying a short literary text or – more often – an extract, answering questions about it, and doing exercises on vocabulary and grammar relating to it. The status of the text as literature here is not important, and there is little or no concern with stylistic effect. Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) warn about a possible negative effect of this kind of reading: the exclusive usage of short texts and extracts can distort literature, discourage extensive reading and prevent the development of learner independence.

2.9.8 Linguistic analysis

Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) believe that this is one of the major activity types which are appropriate in many literature classes for foreign language learners. It involves looking very closely at the language of literary texts, including mainly local or short-range features such as deviance, regularity, polysemy and mimesis, and also features of discourse organization or narrative structure which, typically operate over longer stretches of text. This

approach is particularly useful in foreign language teaching, because the students become aware of such questions as syntax and vocabulary, and can take their own steps to solve problems which they may encounter reading authentic text as non-native readers.

2.9.9 Personal response

This loose term could be applied to many aspects of classroom activities; Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) discuss two types. In the first one, the students are asked what books or parts of books they want to study (this includes all major forms of literature: novels, poems, plays and short-stories). After starting a book they are asked how much they like it, and what they want to do now: finish or abandon it, read it in more or less depth, continue it in class or finish it on their own, write or talk about it in different ways, go on to more works of the same type or something different. Students are encouraged to give more details of their reaction, and of the features of the text which caused this reaction, but only if they want to, not as an answer to prove their academic knowledge or skill.

The second type of personal response is concerned with the question: “Has anything like this ever happened to you?” Such a question can be asked either before or after a book has been read. Considerable caution is necessary in the selection and presentation of questions for personal response activities: many, or perhaps most, important events and feelings described in literature are potentially painful or embarrassing (Parkinson and Reid Thomas, 2000).

2.9.10 Games and fun activities

Many activities can enliven the process of classroom learning. Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) suggest:

- vocabulary matching, where words from a text are written on slips of paper, the definitions on other slips, and both are distributed to students, who have to find a match;
- crosswords and similar puzzles;
- charades, where learners have to “demonstrate” a literary work or character by gestures without speaking;
- “Just a minute”, where students have to talk about a given topic for sixty seconds without hesitation, repetition or deviation;
- different guessing activities.

Some of these activities are based on the students' factual knowledge of the text, others can be used only after a text has already been read and understood; moreover, some of them are not particularly concerned with literature, which is why it is not recommended by Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) to use them extensively.

Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) do not suggest that it is better to use either traditional or less traditional types of activities; rather, they can complement each other in an actual classroom. A balance should be kept between traditional and innovative EFL teaching: some conventional methods and ways have proven their effectiveness and should be preserved; whereas new methods may appear to be less effective than expected, and not suitable for certain student groups.

2.9.11 Performing a literary work

These kinds of activities are usually associated with drama, because this is a genre which is written to be performed. Performance as classroom practice means in its most minimal form reading a dialogue aloud with some kind of interpretation: using pauses, tone of voice, or even facial expressions. At its fullest, performing a play means the process of casting, rehearsals, costumes, props and eventually the presence of an audience, which usually makes students nervous. This is the reason for possible reservations as to the use of this method in the classroom. Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000), however, encourage teachers not to give up on performance entirely, but rather negotiate with students what can be acceptable, because any kind of performance can contribute to understanding and general language improvement.

2.9.12 Prediction and related guessing activities

This type of activities is based on curiosity and the desire to know what will happen next. The students can be asked to predict what a story is going to be about on the basis of the title alone, or one or two paragraphs. One of the advantages of this type of activities is that students do not fail if they guess wrong. Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) also name other advantages of this technique: a heightened awareness of literary conventions, a closer look at details of the plot, and personal involvement. However, if these activities are used too often

they may become routine, or if too much attention is devoted to plot, other interesting features will be missed.

2.9.13 Creating one's own text

The types of activities gathered under this heading may be described as creative writing. Students can be asked to write their own text, or a parody, or to transfer a text into another genre (e.g. a novel into a play). There is an infinite number of activities teachers can choose from, taking into consideration their students' level and resources available. Other alternatives are keeping a reading diary where students can write their thoughts about what they read, writing an alternative ending or beginning of a story, or making a news report about a scene from a text or an interview with a literary character. These tasks may seem to be challenging as they require students' creativity and imagination, but at the same time they have a potential for motivating students to read if teachers prepare them thoroughly.

3. Project design and data collection

In this chapter I discuss the design of my project and my data collection method. I will also touch upon some ethical issues. I then proceed to discuss and explain the method of interpretation and analysis of my data.

3.1 The general approach and research design

Since my main question has a descriptive character, my general approach is qualitative rather than quantitative. First, I deal with thoughts and opinions and not with numerical data, and second, my analysis of data is interpretive, not statistical. My subjectivity, as well as the subjectivity of those who I am studying, my reflections and impressions are a part of my project. My subjective point of view was the starting point for my research (Flick, 2009).

Another characteristic of qualitative inquiry which is important for me is its interpretive nature: “The researchers’ interpretations cannot be separated from their own background, history, context, and prior understanding” (Creswell, 2007; p. 39). Again, my position as a researcher, as well as my interpretation of data, are as important as the thoughts and opinions of my informants.

3.2 Data collection method

Taking into account that my thesis is a small-scale project, it seems reasonable to employ only one method for data collection. And again, my research question determines my method: in order to find out how English speaking literature is taught in the upper secondary school it seems natural to turn to teachers, and the best way is to ask them about it, namely conduct interviews: “The object under study is the determining factor for choosing a method and not the other way round” (Flick, 2009)

At earlier stages of my project development I considered observation as a main or complementary method, but after some consideration, the interview seemed to be the most appropriate method for data collection. Observation alone cannot provide a holistic picture

of a literature teaching process since it is limited by the time and topic of a single lesson. To attend lessons means to cause more disturbance both for teachers and students. Interviews, on the other hand, provide an opportunity to cover more topics.

Another feature of the interview as a method which attracts me is the fact that it affects both the interviewee and the interviewer (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009): teachers can reflect upon their teaching methods and practices after being asked relevant questions, and their answers can invite me to do the same in relation to my own experience.

3.3 Practicalities of the data collection

The sampling criteria of my project, determined by my data collection method, are *who* (which participants and how many), *what*, *where* (settings for my data collection), and *when* (when to start and finish).

As has already been mentioned, my sampling is limited by my main research question which determined my participants, namely teachers in upper secondary school. The question of *what* is determined by the scope of my research – literature teaching. First of all it is necessary to decide on the number of teachers I am going to interview. There are two main study streams in the Norwegian upper secondary school: general studies and vocational studies. Although the aim of my project is not to compare those two streams, moreover they both use the same curriculum, I think it is interesting to try and find out whether there are any differences in teachers' approaches to literature teaching in these two streams. This is why I have chosen to interview three teachers from a school which offers programs for general studies, and three teachers from a school with programs for vocational studies. Age and gender are of no importance for the project.

It seems reasonable to interview my informants in their natural setting – schools. A natural setting is one of the most important characteristics of qualitative research (Creswell, 2007), because researchers tend to collect data at the site where their subjects deal with or experience relevant issues. My choice of setting is also determined by convenience both for me and my informants. At the same time, the number of schools I can turn to is limited for practical reasons, so I have only chosen schools situated in or near Hamar: Hamar katedralskole and Storhamar videregående skole.

One might argue that I chose convenience samples as opposed to representative samples which produce findings that are statistically generalizable (Robson, 2007). However, the aim of my project is not to make generalizations and make them statistically reliable.

When it comes to the *when*-question, I felt more or less free about the actual start of my data collection because of my flexible design. At the same time, the prospect of transcribing my interviews urged me to contact the schools as soon as possible, which is why my first contact with schools took place in December 2008. I gave myself a time span ranging from two to four weeks to conduct all interviews starting from the middle of January 2009. Not everything went according to plan, but as has already been mentioned, my flexible design allowed me to change my plan.

3.4 Ethical considerations

The main ethical issue of any research is to avoid harming respondents in any way, during the project and after it has been finished. My project does not involve obtaining any personal information, except for the opinions and thoughts of my informants on professional topics and information about their education. Nevertheless, interviewing people implies exchange of information which may be sensitive for the informants. In order to protect their interests different guidelines and codes of ethics have been formulated (Flick, 2009; p. 37).

In order to conform with the regulations, I obtained a license from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). During our first meetings, I showed the license to the school management and teachers and informed them about the aims and purposes of my research. I then obtained a written informed consent from the teachers, in which they gave me permission to use the information from the interview in my research. They also agreed that the interview would be recorded and transcribed, and that parts of it could be published in my thesis. I informed them that all personal information would be treated confidentially, and the data would be made anonymous before it was made available to anyone other than me. By confidentiality I mean discretion in keeping any personal information in secret, and by anonymity – no names are given.

3.5 Interview guide

My approach is to conduct a semi-structured interview based on an interview guide which is elaborated on prior to the meeting with the teachers. Other approaches like group interviews or telephone interviews do not seem to be appropriate for the main purpose of my project: I want to talk to the teachers in a more or less informal conversational situation, but at the same time there are some specific areas I need to cover, which is why I as a researcher have to control the situation. I also consider that the interview guide will increase the reliability of my findings, since all the teachers are asked the same questions.

My interview guide consists of four areas: “In general”, “Curriculum, textbooks and texts”, “Motivation” and “Work with text” (see Appendix 1). Each of these is introduced by open questions, followed by sequences of theory driven questions (particularly the main part dealing with work with texts), and ended by confrontational questions (Flick, 2009). Being a first-time researcher, it seemed reasonable to write down the exact form of wording for all my questions in order to feel more confident.

One of the strengths of the semi-structured interview is its naturalism: if conducted skillfully it might sound almost like a conversation between two people (Robson, 2007), which will probably make informants feel more free and relaxed. On the other hand, a researcher has to have skills of controlling this created interaction. In order to acquire the skills needed and to test out my interview guide, I ran a pilot study. Initially I planned to talk to two teachers, but I ended up with only one interview. Nevertheless, I feel that my natural communicational skills helped me during the actual interviews, together with the experience I gained from my pilot study. As for my interview guide, I found out that it worked, and I obtained a fair amount of information which I was interested in. I made some adjustments so that my questions were more structured, and so that the total time of the interview would not exceed 45 minutes. I also decided to record all the interviews on a digital voice recorder.

3.6 Entering the field

There may be different problems when entering institutions as a research field, and the most important one is that “[r]esearch is always an intervention into a social system” (Wolff, 2004, cited in Flick, 2009; p. 108). I feel the fact that I had obtained my license from NSD

added credibility to my research in the eyes of the school management and teachers, but I still remained the intruder into their everyday routine. That is why it was also necessary to think about my role as a researcher in a research field, which I think made me feel more confident when I had to explain my intentions in that particular institution.

First of all, I am a key instrument in my research (Creswell, 2007): I intend to collect all the data I need through interviewing people. I also developed my own protocol for the interview – my interview guide.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) discuss two metaphors of the interviewer in the research field: a miner or a traveler. According to the miner metaphor, knowledge is understood as a valuable mineral resource which a researcher has to mine. The knowledge is already there, and only waits to be unearthed. The traveler metaphor, on the other hand, understands the interviewer as “a traveler on a journey to a distant country that leads to a tale to be told upon returning home” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; p. 48). The knowledge or “tale” is not the only purpose of the journey; the traveler might also change at the end of it. The stories he or she has heard might lead to reflection and maybe better ways of self-understanding. The miner approach sees the interview situation as a site of data collection, which has no meaning in subsequent data analysis. In a traveler approach, the processes of interviewing and analysis are intertwined. The latter approach is closer to my project, first of all because I am literally a traveler – a researcher from another country, and secondly, because the interview situation and my reflections on the interview are as important as the analysis itself.

Flick (2009) employs another metaphor describing a researcher in the study field: the researcher as a professional stranger (Agar, 1980, cited in Flick, 2009). This status can be further differentiated depending on the strategy a researcher has chosen:

- a “visitor” who shows up only to conduct interviews and remains an outsider, or
- an “initiate” who is going to give up his or her outsider position in the course of the research. This perspective is closer to those who intend to observe their subjects in their natural settings.

I see myself as a visitor who approaches subjects in order to conduct an interview. I do not need to become an insider, because my aim is to find out about the attitudes and feelings of the teachers, and try to understand them through the process of conducting and analyzing the

interviews. The role of an insider would be suitable for me in the case of possible observations, but I gave up that idea in the early stages of my project.

Having the idea about myself as a researcher who is on a journey to find out something about other people's experiences helped me during my first contacts with the management of the chosen schools. It is very important to be able to explain briefly and clearly what your aims are and what you are going to do in order to gather the information you need. I mainly communicated with the heads of the foreign languages departments of both schools, but the school management knew about my presence. As for the teachers, they were willing to share their knowledge and experiences with me and were very enthusiastic about my topic.

Some additional considerations about the interview situation itself concerned possible issues that might affect my interaction with the teachers, and the danger of bias. First of all, the interaction itself seems to be somewhat curious, because neither I nor the teachers speak our native languages, so there is a possibility of misunderstanding. But I do not think this is the case, because the interview is on strictly professional topics which both sides are familiar with.

As for bias, I had no hidden agenda, no presuppositions embarking on this project, which is why I consider myself as not biased. I might be forced – unintentionally – to compare certain aspects of literature teaching in Norway with those in Ukraine, and possibly express my opinions during the interview, but I was well aware of this possibility and did not intend to judge the practice of the teachers I was going to interview. In an attempt to avoid this, I decided to explain when it seemed necessary why I asked that particular question, and why it was so interesting for me as an outsider from another country and from another teaching tradition.

3.7 Interviewing

I started all of my interviews with a briefing in which I explained the aims of my project, told the teachers about myself and asked for their written consent to become a participant in my project. I also informed them that the interview would be recorded with a sound recorder. Flick (2009) discusses several problems which the presence of the recording may cause: first of all, the interview situation may lose its naturalism, because the respondents

are well aware of the presence of a recording device. Another possible issue is the loss of anonymity for the interviewees, but I did not experience any problems with the interview being recorded, and the teachers seemed to ignore the presence of the sound recorder.

However, I experienced some other problems which I want to discuss here. First of all, the interview technique differs from the ability to keep up a common conversation. While analyzing my interviews I realized that there were some things I could have asked my informants to explain in more detail.

Secondly, it was difficult to let go of my interview guide. It requires a certain level of flexibility to be able to conduct an interview without it getting very formal. The interviewer has to be able to switch easily from one area of the interview guide to another, because the general outcome of the interview will benefit from this.

The more I progressed with my interviews, the more I felt I was becoming better at interviewing, letting go of my interview guide, asking questions that were not in it, but which I came up with during the interview. The final result could have been better had I known more about the process of interviewing. But on the other hand, my work is a natural progression of any research project, when one starts as one person with particular preconceptions and ends up being a different person with (to some extent) an altered point of view, having gained or developed new skills.

Sometimes I felt like I was a “torturer” during my interviews, because I asked some questions which required some time to be answered, so some teachers had to dig deep into their memories and experience to be able to answer them. Some questions were unexpected, but I think this only added to the general outcome of the interviews: I intentionally chose not to send my questions to the teachers prior to the interviews, to ensure that their answers would not be thought over and prepared. I wanted the situation to be as genuine as possible, where an informant met a question directly before answering it. On the other hand, I understand that if my informants had received the questions beforehand, their answers would have been more thorough and complete.

3.8 Interview quality

Kvale (2009) proposes six quality criteria for a semi-structured interview which can help one to assess the quality of the conducted interview:

1. The extent of spontaneous, rich, specific, and relevant answers from the interviewee.
2. The extent of short interviewer questions and longer interviewee answers.
3. The degree to which the interviewer follows up and clarifies the meanings of the relevant aspects of the answers.
4. To a larger extent, the interview being interpreted throughout the interview.
5. The interviewer attempting to verify his or her interpretations of the subjects answers over the course of the interview.
6. The interview being “self-reported”, a self-reliant story that hardly requires additional explanations (Kvale, 2009; p. 164).

However, as Kvale suggests, different ways of conducting interviews can involve different quality criteria.

Based on the criteria listed above, I assess the quality of my interview as rather high. Even so, I am a first-time researcher, and could not avoid some mistakes, like interrupting my informants and not letting them finish what they were saying when I wanted immediate clarification of something in their responses. At the same time, I tried to be open to new views and ideas brought by my subjects, and let them talk about things which were not in my interview guide. I also tried to stay interpretive throughout the whole interview, asking the teachers whether I had understood them correctly, and the teachers then confirmed or disconfirmed my statements.

I tried to pose clear and short questions, but I had to use some professional terms, the meanings of which I explained if I was asked to do so. This helped me to obtain rich and extensive answers from my respondents. And one of the main indicators of quality for me is that I received some unexpected and interesting views and ideas in the course of the interviews.

3.9 Editing and interpretation

In order to be able to analyze collected data it is necessary to transcribe, reduce and categorize it. However, there is no single agreed way of doing this within the realm of qualitative research (Robson, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). A researcher has to decide which particular method or combination of methods is appropriate for the study. As a preparatory stage, Flick (2009) advises global analysis, as suggested by Legevie. This method of editing texts consists in reading, structuring and summarizing the texts. A researcher should note keywords and ideas while reading through the text and structuring its longer passages into smaller chunks of material. Another step is to produce a table of contents, which includes keywords and themes characteristic to the text. Then the researcher has to summarize the text and evaluate its importance for the interpretation.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest eclectic and theoretical analyses of interviews which give researchers a fair amount of freedom in their interpretation, employing different techniques which do not bind them to any particular method, but at the same time enable them to obtain clear and manageable data. By theoretical reading Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) mean “a theoretically informed reading of interviews” (p. 235).

I believe the combination of the methods of global analysis and theoretical reading suits my project, because my research is based on the theory of literature teaching, and aims to find out how it is used in practice. However, there must be space for new views and ideas, which global analysis enables me to find and highlight.

The transcription stage can be the most challenging part of a project, first and foremost because it is time consuming. Moreover, no universal code or standard for the transcription of research interviews has been established (Flick, 2009; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). However, there are some conventions or rules for transcribing oral language which should followed in order to produce reliable written data. These include a clear marking of turn taking, breaks, ends of sentences, checking the transcript against the recording, and the anonymization of all possible personal information, which can be done by giving fictional names to the informants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; see Appendix 2).

I transcribed only as much and as exactly as I believed was needed to answer my research question. Each interview resulted in 20 to 26 pages of transcribed text. The process of

editing and analysis started already in the transcription phase, as I left out statements which were felt to be of no relevance for my project in order to reduce the overall amount of data, and jotted down memos to myself reflecting my insights and thoughts. All the quotations in my analysis of the interviews are taken from the transcriptions.

The next step of data reduction is the coding – breaking the data into small pieces of material that might be put into categories. I have used the categories derived from the interview guide, which was originally divided into four sections, each of which deals with different aspects of my project. These categories develop sub-categories depending on the issues involved. The main purpose of categorization is to compare and contrast categories in order to find those things that seem to be similar and those that seem to be different (Robson, 2007).

Different forms of data display help to reduce and organize qualitative data, which is why I compiled a table containing categories and key words from the statements of the teachers. This table then became the transformed and categorized data for my analysis (see Appendix 3, which represents a part of the table).

4. Analysis of the curricula and the textbooks

In this chapter I will analyze two English subject curricula: the previous one from Reform 94 (R-94), designed for upper secondary school, and the current one from “The Knowledge Promotion” (LK06). I chose to analyze these two curricula because the new curriculum has been implemented gradually, and the R-94 curriculum was still in use in upper secondary school at some stages of my research. Since English language literature is not singled out as a separate subject, but is a part of the overall English language teaching, the English subject curriculum has to explain how literature teaching is integrated into the language teaching.

Then I will proceed with an analysis of the textbooks for both streams of upper secondary school: general and vocational studies. The aim is to see to what degree the authors of the textbooks fulfill the LK06 aims with respect to literature, and how various texts are presented in them.

4.1 Curricula

4.1.1 The role of English and its implications for the study of literature

The first chapter of R-94 is devoted mainly to the explanation of the importance of English as a school subject: English is called the international language of the world, which is used in various areas of people’s lives and activities. English language literature is seen as a frame of reference for Norway in contacts with the USA and the UK, because by studying it students will learn something about how people there think and speak, what kind of problems they have – the kind of things which are not the focus of standard textbook articles. By learning English, students will learn about the culture of English speaking countries as well: cultural heritage, ways of living and thinking, which will enable them to get insights into their own culture. The practical value of literature is given priority: literature contributes to the development of linguistic competence.

In its introductory article, LK06 also explains the importance of English in the modern world and in Norway, because English is everywhere: in films, literature, songs, sports, business,

products, trade and entertainment. Many English words and expressions have found their way into Norwegian. Besides, English is increasingly used in education and working life, both in Norway and abroad. Unlike R-94, in LK06 literature is among the main areas of the subject. LK06 concentrates on two aspects of literature in the EFL teaching: linguistic and motivational. Working with literature contributes to the development of linguistic skills, and reading literature may cultivate a love for reading in students and contribute to their personal growth. Literature also provides insights into other people's culture and way of life. Thus the curriculum touches upon both the practical and the aesthetic value of literature. However, although LK06 mentions the aesthetic value of literature in the introductory article to the curriculum, it is not elaborated further. The introductory article is concluded by a statement of the importance of linguistic and cultural competence, to which the development of literature is supposed to assist.

4.1.2 Motivation

R-94 mentions the students' own motivation and personal interests which can be used in a constructive way as a tool in the learning process. The students are supposed to take responsibility for their own learning. The notion of the students' aptitude is also taken up, as well as the need for necessary adjustments in the learning process according to the levels of aptitude of various pupils. The LK06 curriculum stresses the importance of the students' conscious learning strategies: they are supposed to establish their own goals for learning, to determine how these can be achieved, and to assess the way they use the language. There is not less focus on the pupils' own motivation. It is mentioned with regards to literature: English texts, films and other art forms may inspire young people to develop their own creativity in many genres and media.

4.1.3 Aims of the subject

Both curricula set aims for the development of linguistic and communicative competence. R-94 concentrates mainly on the development of foreign language competence: students have to be able to understand and use oral and written English. Understanding of culture, society and literature are to be studied in connection with the USA and the UK (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2005).

LK06 singles out three main areas in the subject, which are interrelated and must be considered together:

- language learning (knowledge about the language, language usage and insight into one's own language learning);
- communication (achieved through listening, reading, writing, prepared oral production and spontaneous oral interaction, including the use of appropriate communication strategies);
- culture, society and literature (focuses on cultural understanding in a broad sense) (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006).

Thus, cultural competence becomes more salient in LK06. Neither of the curricula mentions the development of literary competence.

4.1.4 Literary genres and choice of texts

Neither curriculum contains references as to what exactly pupils have to read; however, there is some mention of various types of texts:

- R-94: professionally oriented texts (articles, work descriptions, manuals, instructions), short stories, excerpt from a play or literary work (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2005);
- LK06: genres (poetry, short story, novel and drama), as well as “other cultural expressions” (not explained) (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006).

As for the main tasks and aims of reading English language literature in upper secondary school, the curricula specify them as follows:

Table 1. The main tasks and aims of reading literature in EFL

R-94 (my translation)	LK06
<i>The pupil should be able to</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the main contents of professionally oriented texts • understand professionally oriented texts in detail • extract relevant information from texts • understand the text's message and its main distinctive features • reproduce and discuss the contents of at least two short stories or an excerpt from a play (which was read or seen), and the contents of a literary work (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand extended written and oral presentations on different personal, literary, interdisciplinary and social topics • extract essential information from spoken and written texts and discuss the author's attitudes and point of view • analyse and discuss a film and a representative selection of literary texts in English from the genres poetry, short story, novel and drama • discuss a selection of literary texts in English from various regions of the world and different periods from the 1500s up to the present • discuss literature by and about indigenous peoples in the English-speaking world • present and discuss international news and current events • prepare and assess his or her own written or oral texts inspired by literature and art (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006)

Both curricula concentrate on four main activities in relation to work with texts: production (speaking and writing); reception (listening and reading); interaction (dialogues or discussions on the basis of a text); and mediation (interpretation). At the same time, there is no specific information as to the types of texts to read. Some descriptions are very vague, for example, "literary work" in R-94, or "other cultural expressions" in LK06. Also, the time span "from the 1500s up to the present" seems to be very wide: what periods and works of what writers are reasonable to include?

4.1.5 Assessment of the students' knowledge

R-94 has a separate chapter which includes the following sections: why assessment?, what should be evaluated?, how assessment should be carried out, and special conditions which apply to the subject. The LK06 curriculum only says that there is an overall achievement

grade and examinations for students after the tenth grade, and a compulsory English course in upper secondary school. Otherwise it does not say what should be assessed and how, but it mentions that general provisions on assessment have been laid down in the Regulations relating to the Norwegian Education Act.

Neither of the curricula says anything about what is expected of students in terms of literature.

4.1.6 Summing up

The two curricula state the importance of English in a modern society, but differences in terminology as regards English can be explained by the development of the society and the role of English in it.

The R-94 English subject curriculum states the importance of the students' own motivation in a learning process, whereas LK06 only has implicit mention of motivation. I prefer to think of this also in terms of the role English plays today: motivation is understood as a matter of course, and students are supposed to take responsibility for their own learning.

As to the assessment of the subject, I think that R-94 is more helpful, because it explains what should be assessed, and how. Having said this, I would like to note that both curricula could have been more descriptive in their statements about assessment: what are the standards?

Literature has gained more importance in LK06. The LK06 English subject curriculum mentions the practical and aesthetic value of literature. It also mentions the main literary genres, as well as the type of work which is supposed to be done with texts. The time span suggested by the curriculum is very wide: from the 1500s to the present day. Teachers have to rely on the choices made by the authors of the textbooks, or they can choose texts themselves.

There is not much information about the types of texts which should be used in a teaching process. R-94 speaks about professionally oriented texts, whereas LK06 speaks about

literary forms in general. This fact may also be explained in terms of the wide choice of English textbooks available in Norway, which contain everything that a teacher might need.

Since both curricula state the importance of the development of communicative and linguistic competence, as well of cultural awareness, they both adopt a language-based approach to literature, whose main function is to give students examples of English usage and an insight into other people's culture.

4.2 Textbooks analysis

The two textbooks used by the teachers I have interviewed are *Targets* (VG1) and *Workshop* (VG1 and VG2). *Targets* was written according to the guidelines of the R-94 curriculum, but is still being used today. *Workshop* (VG1 and VG2) has been designed for the vocational program Health and Social Studies. It consists of two volumes, designed for each of the two years of English in the vocational studies. I will look at the structure of each of the textbooks, the types of texts, and the tasks which accompany the texts. I am also interested in looking at how much place is given to literary texts and literary competence in these textbooks.

According to R-94, the main goal of learning English is communicative competence, which is why, I believe, the main focus of *Targets* is on linguistic competence. The *Workshop* textbooks are written according to LK06 guidelines and contain texts and tasks focusing on the three main areas in the subject: language learning, communication, and culture, society and literature. The tasks are designed to help the development of the students' basic skills in the subject: reading, listening, writing and speaking. Given that both study streams in the upper secondary school use the same curriculum, the textbook authors' challenge consists in incorporating texts and exercises which have to do with the different vocational programs in the textbooks.

4.2.1 Organization

Both *Targets* and *Workshop* are organized thematically: each chapter focuses on one of the topics relevant to the curriculum and to the study stream. All chapters are self-contained, comprising texts relating to the topic and exercises aimed at developing various skills. The

Targets textbook consists of four chapters, each containing the following elements: contents study, skills work (each chapter has its main priority or main target skill), and digital competence. All the topics are connected to the USA and the UK, since R-94 focuses on these two countries. Among the main topics of *Targets* are the following: the English speaking world, English as an international language, the history and geography of the USA and the UK, aspects of the society of these two countries, and education, work and the environment. The table of contents tells the students about the types of texts they will read and whether a text is available on the teacher's/student's CD.

The *Workshop VG1* textbook is for the three-hour English course taken by vocational students at VG1 level. The textbook is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the English speaking world and covers topics relevant for the general studies, like American and British life, as well as the life of other English speaking countries. This part is identical for all the *Workshop* textbooks for various vocational programs. The second part focuses on the chosen vocational program (in this case health and social care). Among the topics covered are: global medicine, first aid, miscommunication, communication with old people, young parents, etc. Besides the textbook, there are other resources for teachers and students, like CDs, a teacher's book and an Internet site. The Internet site has extra materials, links to useful web pages, tasks, interactive exercises, animated texts, self assessment forms, and advice on many topics.

The *Workshop VG2* textbook is for the two-hour English course of the second year of the vocational studies. It is also divided into two parts, one of which is designed to cover the topics relevant for the general studies (e.g., the history of the English language, ways of using the language in different media, various issues of the modern world), and the other the vocational subjects (career choices, aspects of aging, handling patients, and so on).

4.2.2 Instructions

Both *Targets* and *Workshop* contain information about the learning process itself, which is supposed to help pupils in their studies. Thus different learning styles are taken up: the visual learner, the auditory learner and the kinesthetic/tactile learner, with clues and tips for every style. The textbook also talks about speaking strategies (to give or to get information,

informal and formal language) and reading strategies (scanning, skimming, reading to learn, to get an overview, or reading to enjoy).

In order to help students to succeed in various aspects of their studies, there are “How to...” sections in the *Workshop* textbooks which contain advice about how to structure a text, how to read poetry, how to analyze a film, how to choose the right style of language, how to use the Internet as a source of information, how to learn new words in English, etc. All the articles of the “How to...” section are designed to help students to deal with their short and long term tasks in the course. They seem to be very helpful as they contain advice of how to make the students’ work better and are written in a simple language with short sentences. At the same time the amount and quality of information seem to be enough for students to succeed in their study.

I would also like to note that the words which are provided with translation in the margins of *Workshop* sometimes seem to be very simple and should be in the students’ active vocabulary, in contrast to some of the words in the texts, which can be much more difficult. Probably, the authors’ intention is to motivate students to look up words in a dictionary themselves. For this particular purpose there is an article, “How to use your dictionary”, about different types of dictionaries and how to read and understand a dictionary article.

4.2.3 Texts and genres

The types of texts presented in *Targets* comprise poems, quizzes, factual texts and standard textbook articles, short stories, interviews, songs, an extract from a play, film scripts, and a novel extract. The most dominant forms are short stories and textbook articles because of their convenience for the study process: they are short and easy to work with in class. Some texts are adapted, like Ray Bradbury’s “I See You Never”. There is only one excerpt from a play – the extract from the “Balcony Scene” from Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, and one novel extract – Elizabeth George’s “In the Presence of the Enemy”. There is also an extract from a film script, maybe as an alternative to a play. I think there is a good representation of both factual prose and fiction in *Targets*. The authors explain their choice of texts according to “their linguistic challenge, informative value, intellectual stimulation and human interest appeal” (Berntzen et al, 2005; p. 3).

The text genres in *Workshop* vary considerably, with the short story dominating here as well.

There is also a broad representation of poems in *Workshop*. In fact, almost every chapter contains a short story and a poem. These poems have themes that are relevant to the topic of the chapter. There are also lyrics of contemporary songs in *Workshop*, which are presumably presented as a variation of poems. The tasks which require an understanding of poetry are usually graded as the most difficult ones. Other forms of texts include factual texts, excerpts from novels and plays, film scripts and songs. The textbook contains a broad representation of works of different authors for whom English is either the first or the second language. All the texts have been selected to give students an idea of the way of life in the English speaking world, but at the same time make them “laugh, learn something new and interesting, and make them think” (Langseth, Lundgren, & Skanke, 2007; p. 3). The authors’ statement explains that literature can serve many different purposes, some of them simultaneously. It is also said that students are not expected to read all of the texts. Instead, it is suggested that they discuss with their teacher the topics they want to work with.

4.2.4 Tasks

All the texts in *Targets* and *Workshop* have pre- or post-reading tasks, or information about the author, country, historical period or a particular problem. The pupils are thus prepared for the reading: they get to know what they are about to read and do, and why. All the tasks of *Targets* are divided according to the four main skills: reading, speaking, writing and listening. However, there is no division of the tasks in *Targets* according to the level of difficulty, whereas in *Workshop* almost all the tasks are divided into three levels of difficulty, so that all the students get a chance to complete a task according to their level of aptitude. The students are free to choose the task they are most comfortable with. Some tasks in the textbooks seem to be quite challenging, and demand additional knowledge and help from a teacher. At the same time the tasks vary from text to text and some of them are very interesting. Some tasks take the students’ interests and possible problems into consideration, and suggest that they express their opinion on the matter.

4.2.4.1 Reading

In *Targets* the students usually read for information; e.g., the class may be divided into two groups with different tasks for each group, or the students read and write down some questions and answers for each other. While reading a short story students have to pay attention to some details, namely setting, characters, plot and theme. Students are often

asked questions about their emotional reactions to literary texts. There are many tasks aimed at understanding the writer's intentions: students are given leading questions about characters, or are asked to note down key words to make a characterization of one particular character, etc.

In *Workshop*, the section on reading and understanding usually includes tasks where students are asked to match sentences, or translate sentences into Norwegian (only once), write a short summary of the story (the highest level of difficulty) or answer questions. The questions vary from those about the plot of the story or its main characters and their actions, to more difficult ones, where students are supposed to express their own opinion, agreement or disagreement.

Tasks are varied to a certain extent, and give students the opportunity to express their own opinion and compare it with opinion of their classmates. They are given the definition of a short story along with its main features which distinguish it from other literary forms. On the basis of this definition, the pupils are asked, often with the help of the leading questions, to pay attention to some particular features of the short story, like plot, setting, characters and theme. All this may help to understand the author's intentions, which makes the process of reading more meaningful. The attention is also drawn to another aspect of reading: trying to understand the role language plays in literary texts. This may also help to understand the author's intentions.

4.2.4.2 Speaking

In the speaking section of both textbooks, students may be asked to express their opinions about what they have read. They discuss the writer's intentions and literature, talk about Norwegian culture or may be asked to read aloud.

It is important that various speaking strategies are explained in the textbook, as well as the importance of choosing the right strategy according to the purpose and the audience. The pupils are also told about formal and informal language and differences between them.

4.2.4.3 Writing

Students may take notes, write a story or a review; e.g., they are asked to describe what they like or dislike about the story, whether the characters are well drawn or are stereotypes, to

pay attention to the language of the story, and so on. There are some practical tasks like writing a letter (both formal and informal), a diary or an e-mail. Some of the tasks seem to be quite challenging, because they require that the students use not only their general knowledge, but their imagination as well. In *Targets*, for instance, students are asked to use their imagination and write a poem called “War”, and in *Workshop* they are asked to write an interview with a famous person, or imagine some kind of life situation and describe it. More frequently in *Workshop* students just have to answer questions about the text they have read, and these are usually the easiest tasks. Some exercises require working with an atlas, encyclopedias, maps, or the Internet. More difficult tasks may ask students to write a news article or to complete a story they have read. At the same time the tasks in both textbooks are quite varied so that the students do not get bored.

4.2.4.4 Listening

Listening for information is a typical listening task in both textbooks. The task can be divided into pre- and post-listening activities. Sometimes the students may listen to the text as many times as they need in order to fulfill the task.

In general, some tasks in the textbooks are very practical, like asking or listening for information, or writing an application – all this may help students later outside the confines of the classroom. When it comes to types of work with literary texts, I find that the tasks aiming at understanding the writer’s intention are very important: with the help of leading questions students learn to understand why the writer chose to write a story and his/her ideas about it. Reading literature presupposes an understanding of many things, and the writer’s intention is among them. Hopefully, in future pupils will be able to ask such leading questions themselves in order to understand a text better.

4.2.5 Literary competence

There is a certain balance between linguistic and literary competence in *Targets*: pupils are provided with necessary literary terms which are supposed to help them understand literary texts better. At the very beginning of the textbook the definition of a short story is given. The short story is also compared with a novel, and the differences between them are explained: time span, form and content. The importance of the “telling detail” is stressed and

a strategy for reading a short story is given: paying attention to the setting, characters, plot and theme.

Having said that, I would like to note that the short story is a dominant literary form in *Targets*. Otherwise the definitions of literary terms are given here and there, not systematically. For example, pupils meet a poem “Walls” by Oswald Mtshali at the very beginning, but there is no specific information about poetry as a genre. Then they read William Blake’s “A Poison Tree” on p. 167, where they have to think about and discuss the poetic language, whereas definitions of figurative language like simile, metaphor, hyperbole and personification are not given until on p. 180, when they encounter another poetic text – four vignettes from Sandra Cisneros’ “The House on Mango Street”. To give another example, the term *science fiction* is first mentioned on page 181, but its meaning is explained on p. 208.

As already mentioned, some tasks in *Targets* seem to be very challenging, demanding some knowledge of literature: in order to express their opinions, students have to be able to operate with and understand literary terms. I believe it is the role of a teacher to ask his/her students whether they understand the task and give necessary explanations.

At the same time, students are not given ready, “pre-digested” opinions about literature, which they have to memorize and re-produce in their answers. They are asked to think for themselves. A teacher may guide or help students if they seem to be perplexed, but ought not to impose his/her or anyone else’s opinion on them. And students are encouraged to express their opinions, and explain and discuss them with each other, but a teacher has to be the main expert who eventually sums up everything which has been said in order to provide the class with some kind of conclusion.

In *Workshop* literary texts are seen as a point of departure for conversations: students can use literary characters and their actions as examples while discussing various problems of a social or cultural character, or different issues of life both abroad and in Norway. What is lacking are questions about the appreciation of literary texts. The students are not often asked whether they like a particular story, and why. I think this has to do with the general purpose of the textbook: to use literary texts as means for developing the students’ knowledge in general and in the chosen vocation. This mostly refers to the *Workshop VG1* textbook, because the book for the second year is more literature oriented. The literature

chapter “Stories of English” in *Workshop* VG2 contains works of writers from different centuries: from the 1500s to the present day. In this chapter students can read some classical works like “The Seven Ages of Man” from *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare, an excerpt from *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, an excerpt from *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens and the poem “What Is Success” by Ralph Waldo Emerson. This chapter contains a “How to...” section which explains how to understand literary terms like setting, character, plot, point of view and theme. Students are then asked to read and work with texts paying attention to these literary terms. Some tasks are quite challenging in this respect and therefore rated as the most difficult ones. However, as the authors of the textbook themselves say, some of the tasks will make students stretch their limits and abilities and use their creativity (Langseth et al, 2007: p. 3). Additionally, the *Workshop* web site contains information about how to understand and analyze poetry, explaining such terms as rhyme, rhythm, assonance, consonance, etc. There are also worksheets for analyzing a poem and analyzing a short story or a novel.

4.2.6 Summing up

The textbooks are written in accordance with the curricula, aiming first and foremost at the development of students’ communicative competence. The status of English in the modern world is taken up. Various strategies of learning, reading and speaking are presented and explained. The textbooks together with CDs and the Internet sites represent a very useful package, but a lot of work seems to be reserved for the teachers who have to adjust the material in the books for their teaching practice.

The tasks aiming at developing the basic skills vary considerably. In *Targets* they are not distinguished according to level of difficulty, whereas in *Workshop* students can choose the level of difficulty which corresponds to their abilities. Students are guided by the authors through the whole book, and there are a lot of advice and suggestions which aim to help students in their work. There are no translation tasks in *Targets*, and there is only one such task in *Workshop*. Perhaps the authors do not consider this type of tasks as productive or useful. There are a few games and other fun activities in the textbooks, but I believe this is up to the teachers whether they want to use them.

Targets seems to be more advanced in terms of the level of English and the literary texts

presented, compared to *Workshop*. *Targets* does not focus on grammar, the tasks seem to be more challenging, and some of the tasks concern literary competence and the students' appreciation of literary texts. The tasks in *Workshop* aim first and foremost at developing students' linguistic competence and basic skills, along with working on topics particularly relevant to the chosen vocational program. Those tasks which invite students to express their own opinions are usually graded as the most difficult ones.

Short stories dominate both books, whereas other literary genres are not presented as fully, something which can be explained by the fact that the short story is more suitable for classroom practice. *Workshop* contains more poems than *Targets*, but they mostly serve the same purpose as other texts, being a starting point for various activities.

The textbooks focus on the understanding of literature to a certain extent, but *Targets* seems to have more tasks aimed at such understanding, whereas *Workshop* has one chapter dedicated solely to literature and its understanding. What I find is lacking is more consistency in the presentation of the literary terminology, but the authors might leave this to the teachers, who are supposed to know their students better and feel where and when assistance in this field is needed. Literature seems to be a tool for developing the linguistic competence of the students.

5. Interview analysis

This chapter presents my analysis of the interviews. I follow the structure of my interview guide, which is divided into four parts: general questions, the English subject curriculum, the role of students' motivation in the ESL teaching, and the actual work with texts.

In the general part teachers talk about their education, teaching experience and literature in general. The aim is to find out how the teachers' education and their relation to literature, both in private and in their role as teachers, might affect their choice of methods and practices. The second part consists of questions about the current curriculum. This is especially important since my interviews take place in the final part of the implementation of LK06, which must have some effect on the teaching process. I will analyze what the teachers say about the new curriculum, and the differences between R-94 and LK06 with regards to literature. In the next part I analyze how the students' motivation to read English language literature affects the teaching process. The last part of my analysis deals with what the teachers actually do with the English language literature.

5.1 The general part

In this part of the interview the teachers were asked to tell me about their teaching experience, what literature means to them personally and as a school subject. They were also asked to think about the aesthetic value of literature, and whether it is important in upper secondary school (the interview guide can be seen in Appendix 1).

The teaching experience of the teachers who took part in my project ranges from five to forty years, which means that they have been working according to at least two different curricula and can compare them.

Two of the teachers, Stig and Oliver, teach only in the vocational studies; one of them, Leah, teaches only the general studies stream; and three of them, Emma, Tea and Nora teach both study streams.

Four of the teachers have a Master's degree in literature. A Master's degree is not a requirement for teaching upper secondary school, but those who have it think that having one certainly helps when it comes to literature teaching. As Emma puts it,

I think it really helps if you have certain knowledge of or certain experience of studying literature yourself. It's like with everything: the more you know yourself, the better you can explain, the better you can find angles, maybe the more creative you can be, because you are quite safe and you are quite confident in the material yourself.

(See also Ch. 3 about the use of quotations in my interview analysis)

All six teachers have a very close personal relationship to literature; it is a very important part of their life. Stig sees literature as a means of personal development, as well as entertainment. For Emma literature has several functions: enjoyment, pleasure, a means to understand more and to discover something else. Tea calls literature an escape from daily life, it also represents excitement and adventure. So, all of them talk about two sides of literature: it enables people to grow personally, and at the same time it provides amusement.

It is interesting to note that two of the teachers talk about the role of their families in the development of their relations to literature: Stig says that he was brought up in a family with reading traditions, and Nora suggests that she might have inherited her love of reading from her parents. Both were introduced to books at an early age.

When it comes to the role literature plays in school, and especially the main topic of our conversation – English language literature – the teachers tend to speak mostly about its practical value. In accordance with the English subject curriculum, they say that it is important to teach literature along with other things in English. All of them mention literature along with culture and an understanding of how people think: literature communicates feelings, ideas and culture. In this sense literature helps to explain cultural differences. At least that is the idea that different works can say something about where the author is from, and what he or she has experienced. The themes of literary texts can tell us something about the social or cultural aspects of life in English speaking countries.

Another important function of literature is that it gives good examples of the usage of the English language, so that students can see and learn correct English. As Oliver says, literary

texts do not necessarily have to be examples of fine literature: “You have to start somewhere, you can’t start with Shakespeare?!”

This mention is extremely important in the light of what Stig experienced in his teaching career: he does not say much about whether it is important to teach English language literature at this stage of schooling, but he mentions the students’ “preconceptions” and “negative ideas” about literature when they come to upper secondary school. Nora confesses that it is hard to teach literature, because not all the students like to read, and some may even hate literature. The students’ reactions as regards literature from the teachers’ point of view will be discussed later in the part of the analysis which is concerned with motivation.

All the teachers agree that literature can be, and in fact is, communicative: it gives the students something to talk about, which is why it is a good starting point for conversation. This communicative aspect of literature is very important since students at all levels of aptitude can be engaged in conversation, and they can use their English in “a simple way”, as Leah puts it. The teachers believe that it should be easy for all students to come up with and actually say something about a literary text they have read.

When it comes to the aesthetic value of literature, not all the teachers quite understood the question at the beginning. I prefer to think about this in terms of the priorities the curriculum sets for the teachers, and this particular aspect of the English language literature teaching is not of a high priority. Oliver does not talk a lot about the aesthetic dimension of literature, going back to more practical things like picking books for students carefully, so that themes and language are not too difficult. This mention of picking the right books is very important, because in order to be able to appreciate and enjoy literary texts, students have to understand them in the first place. Tea prefers to speak about this aspect of literature only with regard to poetry, because the meaning of poems or their themes is not necessarily the main purpose of reading them or listening to them; it can just be the sounds of words, or how the words are put together which is important in poetry.

Stig is convinced that appreciation of literature is something that will come later. At the same time he says that to start enjoying literature, one has to read extensively, starting from a young age. However, Leah feels that her students do not appreciate literature as “a value in itself”, which makes it difficult to teach. Emma believes that dealing with literary texts gives students something new, something they have never done before since many of them do not

read much, and this sense of accomplishment is very important and satisfying to them. Moreover, it is important to “have feelings about” what you read, according to Nora, because if students “feel something” when they read, they will probably be more interested in a story, and then they will have their opinion about it.

The teachers have strong personal relations to literature, appreciating its aesthetic and practical value. However, with regard to school they prefer to talk about literature as a means or aid in teaching English. They mention the emotional side of reading, but the students’ personal response is not the aim of teaching the English language literature. Its main function is to provide students with insights into other people’s ways of life and to give them examples of English usage.

5.2 Curriculum, textbooks and texts

5.2.1 Curriculum

The transitional period in which LK06 has been implemented affects the teachers and their work. However, they do not see many differences between the previous curriculum and the present one.

In general, the main challenges the teachers are facing after the implementation of LK06 have nothing to do with literature. More problems are related to what is expected of students language-wise: they have to be able to operate with grammar terms and explain why they use English the way they use it. Many students are not prepared to do that. Oliver also adds that the level of what is expected from students is somewhat higher in LK06 compared to the previous curriculum. However, the teachers do not tend to blame the lower secondary school for the lack of general knowledge of English in the students who come to upper secondary school. They prefer to explain the situation in terms of the transitional period in which the interviews are taking place: it is too early to draw any conclusions, because there are no students yet who have completed their education according to LK06. What the teachers try to do is figure out what level their students are on and work from there.

For Stig and Oliver, who teach vocational studies, the main difference between the two curricula is the final exam: according to R-94 the general studies stream and the vocational

studies stream had separate exams designed for each stream. Now both streams follow the same curriculum and take the same exam. Stig feels that right now many of his students will not reach this level.

The fact that the competence aims are the same for both streams affects both teachers and students. All the teachers say that this is not fair towards vocational students, who have to “cover” both general topics and topics which have to do with their chosen vocation, and they still are required to have the same competence as general students. Almost all the teachers who teach vocational students say that some of their students are less interested in general competence, and would like their English knowledge to be more practical. Oliver even says that English is not a priority for vocational students, whose overall knowledge of English can be rather poor.

The same demands for the two streams is a reason for the general character of the final exam: vocational students who spend about 60 per cent of their efforts on general topics and 40 per cent on vocational ones, according to Stig, must have the opportunity to answer the exam questions along with the general studies stream students, who only study general topics. What the teachers see as a kind of solution for this problem is two types of exam, where vocational students can choose for themselves what type of exam they want to take, general or vocational. And if they choose a vocational exam, they should get tasks where they can use both their English skills and skills from other subjects.

5.2.2 Literature in the curriculum

Emma says that literature has gained a more central role in the present curriculum, being among one of the main areas and competence aims in LK06. She also mentions that the curriculum clearly states that students have to read literature of different genres and of different periods of time, ranging from the 1500s up until today. The teachers also have to include texts of authors from other English speaking countries, like India or South Africa, which was not the case in the past.

The previous curriculum limited literature teaching to at least two short stories, a novel and a selection of other things, without defining a historical period. Stig believes that it is very difficult to make a representative selection of English language literature from the 1500s to the present day in one general course of English, not to mention in just one chapter of the

textbook. The curriculum only lets students “taste” a selection from five hundred years of English literature.

For Leah the biggest challenge is “making literature interesting for her students”. She says that there are some important aspects which should be taken into consideration, like finding texts that could be interesting for both sexes, or coming up with topics which might inspire the younger generation. Leah also adds that although literature has gained more importance in the new curriculum, the amount of time stipulated for teaching English remains the same, and she spends less than half of her time on teaching literature. The amount of the material the teachers feel they have to go through with their students, where literature is just a part of the whole, seems to be overwhelming for some teachers. Time is the biggest problem. The need to cover so many things in so little time has its consequences: Nora says that the teachers feel there is not enough time to deal with a writer or a text, because they have to move on to another topic.

All the teachers, and especially Tea and Emma, express their satisfaction with the openness of the new curriculum, and the freedom it gives them: it is up to them what kind of teaching methods they want to choose and what texts they would like to read with their students.

However, not everybody is equally happy with their freedom of choice and the openness of the new curriculum. Leah and Nora express their concerns and say that the new curriculum is too open and too vague, and opens for many different ways of interpreting it. The interpretations will vary from school to school, and from teacher to teacher, depending on the resources available and the qualifications of each individual teacher. All this can eventually lead to conflicts. Nora says that the conflict usually starts when teachers have to decide on which textbooks they are going to use: every teacher reads the curriculum differently, and one teacher’s interpretation can be as right as another’s. Leah is even more direct and calls the openness of the curriculum a weakness and the whole situation quite alarming, because even though there are some references in the curriculum as to what to teach, these references are not concrete enough.

For example, for Nora one of the disadvantages of the new curriculum is that it does not say anything about what writers the students are supposed to read:

I think I’m a bit conservative when it comes to literature, because I really miss the big names. I really feel that a curriculum should mention some

writers that the students must know something about. You don't have to read the whole play, or you don't have to know everything about a writer, but I think the writers should be mentioned. I know that's a conflict between different teachers, because some people think that it's perfect that it's so open to you, you can choose whatever you want to do, but I think it's... I think it secures the quality of teaching if the curriculum says: 'You are supposed to learn something about that writer and that writer'. I like that better.

As has already been mentioned, one of the implications of this is the general and open character of the final exam questions. These questions are formulated in such a way that every student should be able to answer them, regardless of what they have read. Leah thinks that the exam tasks should actually test what students have learned throughout the course:

I think this is a weakness, because they aren't really testing the students' knowledge of British history, American history, literature [...] they don't really have any focus what-so-ever on, you know, all the facts and all the information they actually should know after having gone through this course. The questions are very general.

5.2.3 Textbooks

The curriculum determines the main areas and the competence aims of English as a school subject, but it is the textbooks that have the major influence on how and what the teachers do throughout the year. As has already been mentioned, choosing which textbook the school is going to use is not always an easy task. The teachers analyze the aims of the curriculum and look for the material which covers those aims in a textbook. Having agreed on a textbook, they decide for themselves how closely they follow it.

In general, the teachers say that they prefer to follow the book quite closely, first of all for practical reasons: they have everything in one package and do not have to find the necessary material themselves, which means they avoid too much copying. And very often students just lose their hand-outs, and the textbooks are a guarantee that they are prepared for the lessons. Besides, the textbooks are written by experienced researchers according to the curriculum, so the teachers trust their choices.

If the teachers have worked with a textbook long enough, they can make their own plan and feel free regarding the sequence in which they follow the book, like Emma and Tea, who go back and forth asking their students what they would like to work with.

Stig and Oliver point out that the textbooks contain much more material than it is possible to use in the time they have at their disposal, which is why they have to pick out things they can work with. They also consult with their students about topics and texts that are interesting to them.

5.2.4 Literature in the textbooks

All the teachers agree that short stories are presented very well in the textbooks they use, *Targets* or *Workshop*. They explain this in terms of the practicality of a short story, which lends itself to classroom practice: it is short enough to be read in one sitting, the plot is not too complicated, and there is a limited number of characters, which makes it easy to follow the story and remember it afterwards. The teachers can present a story and its author, read it and discuss it with students within one lesson.

When it comes to other literary genres, the opinions of the teachers vary. Stig would like to see more fictional texts in general. He mentions that it is difficult to find fictional texts on professional topics, which could be interesting for his vocational students. He believes that it is easier to find fictional texts for the general studies. Stig does not say vocational students should be limited to reading fictional texts about their specific field of study, in his case the Health and Social Care study program, but texts with themes that are relevant for his students' vocation would be more interesting for them than texts with more general themes.

The main thing for Oliver is a combination of genres and fiction and non-fiction. He is quite pleased with the selection of works which is presented in the textbooks and trusts the choices of their authors, but he would like to see more non-fiction instead of fiction, since he believes his vocational students are more interested in practical things. However, Tea, who teaches both study streams, says that there are more factual texts than literary ones in a textbook she uses at the vocational studies. Moreover, these literary texts are shorter and seem to be "childish" compared to literary texts from the general studies textbook, because the standard of English is not equally high in the two textbooks, which is interesting, in view of the common curriculum.

Emma says that the two genres which are usually lacking in the textbooks are drama and novel, which are only presented in excerpts. The problem is that the students get to know a bit of a whole, for example, a scene or an episode, but they miss out on the whole

complexity of a literary work. On the other hand, this is necessary since a textbook should present different genres. Nora would like to have more poetry, which is not presented as fully as short stories and novel excerpts. And her main concern is well-established writers, who are usually represented by such authors as Shakespeare and Hemingway; otherwise, there are just a couple of acknowledged texts in the whole textbook.

In general, the teachers think that students like to read something short, something they can relate to or identify with, and something written in a “modern” language, for example, with the use of slang. The teachers say that a short story is always a winner in a classroom context. At the same time, there has to be a variation of genres and texts, otherwise students might just get bored.

Stig mentions that his students find it difficult to talk about poems. He thinks this is probably because poems tend to contain more imagery and abstractions, which might be an obstacle to understanding and therefore enjoying them. Emma, on the other hand, says that poetry is generally underrated, and that students actually tend to like it once they get under the surface level and learn how to read poetry.

As for the overall selection of literary texts, Tea and Leah are not quite satisfied with what the textbooks offer: Tea says she would have picked other texts which are more up-to-date, and Leah finds some of the texts “not inspiring and motivating”. These are the reasons why the teachers sometimes substitute texts from the textbook with texts they find themselves. For Tea, the relevance of a text to the present situation is the main criterion when she chooses new texts. Other teachers take both the students’ interests and the competence aims from LK06 into consideration, as well as the level of their students. The language of a new text should not be too complicated, as Nora points out. She also tries to find texts with topics relevant to the course and themes her students will understand. Leah combines her own interest with considerations about what might be interesting for students, because she thinks that she can communicate the message of the text better if she knows it well. Oliver, who thinks that non-fictional texts suit the needs and interests of his students better, tries to substitute textbook texts with songs or newspaper articles. Sometimes he even uses his personal accounts, for example about his travels, making PowerPoint presentations with pictures.

5.2.5 Common syllabus

The idea of a common syllabus is introduced to the teachers as a hypothetical alternative to the present situation where teachers are free to choose what texts their students will read, one of the consequences of which is the general and highly open character of the exam questions. A common syllabus presents a set of books which every student is supposed to read. The exam tasks may include questions about the texts the students have read during the school year, and the aim of the exam is to test the students' knowledge of texts, themes and authors. This idea is drawn from the Canon Model of literature teaching (see Ch. 2).

Almost all the teachers strongly dislike the thought of having a common syllabus for the whole country, claiming that this would take away their freedom of choice and put a strain on the teachers. As has already been mentioned, the teachers enjoy the openness of the new curriculum, which gives them the opportunity to be more flexible. This also means that they can adjust their methods to the level of their students' knowledge and aptitude, and choose texts which will be both interesting for them and easy to understand.

Oliver is convinced that a common syllabus would take all the responsibility away from him and put limitations on his students, who may not be able to cope with a suggested set of books simply because they do not have the necessary linguistic competence. Emma adds that students and classes differ from one year to another, which is why it is important for teachers to be flexible in their choices of methods and texts. Both agree that the exam questions should stay open enough so that students from both streams can answer them. In this respect Emma sees her task as a teacher as training her students in how to think in order to be able to answer the exam questions. Tea discusses the other side of the syllabus-based exam questions, claiming that there would be a tendency towards teaching only what is going to be on the exam, which she sees as a limitation of her practice.

Nora and Leah like the idea of a common syllabus to a certain extent. However, for Nora, who mentioned the problems connected to choosing a textbook for a school, this idea is potentially problematic because there would certainly be too many opinions on what writers and books should be chosen. Among the advantages of a syllabus-based exam she sees the fact that teachers would know exactly what they are supposed to teach, which secures the overall knowledge of the subject. Leah says that having the same system would secure the quality of teaching and learning and the ways of testing this quality. She also mentions that

the prospect of having a syllabus-based exam might mean that students are more motivated to read, because they know that their work will be assessed at the end of the year.

In general, the teachers say that literature has gained more importance in the new curriculum, but they do not have enough time to fully exploit all the opportunities this gives them. The curriculum sets different competence aims, and literature is only one among them. The teachers enjoy the openness which the curriculum gives them; however, the same openness may become a cause of discrepancy because of different interpretations.

The fact that the same competence aims apply for both streams seems to put some of the vocational students in a difficult situation, when they cannot achieve those aims. The teachers suggest a two exam solution where the vocational students can choose to take an exam which will test their knowledge of English within a chosen vocation.

The textbooks seem to be a great aid for the teachers, providing them with all they may need. Some of the texts may be out-of-date, but the teachers can substitute them with texts they think will suit the students' needs and interests better. However, to find a text, to make copies of it and to make sure that all the pupils have their own copies can be time-consuming, which is why the teachers mainly prefer to use the textbook. The genre which dominates in textbooks is the short story, because of its convenience for classroom practice.

5.2.6 Motivation

Motivation is an integral part of any process of learning. There may be different types of motivation in school: just to learn new things, or to get a good grade, or maybe to please a teacher. When it comes to literature teaching, having motivated students seems to be even more important, because then they are easier to get into reading and discussing texts.

All the teachers express the desire to have more motivated students when it comes to reading literature. In general, they feel that nowadays students are less interested in reading compared to what they saw ten or even five years ago. Very often, they have students who say that they have never read a whole book in their life, and this is quite a challenge for the teachers. However, Stig does not believe that students read less and less, because they have to read in their Norwegian classes, and he sees that many students borrow books from the library. At the same time the teachers try to be realistic: there will always be students who

are not particularly interested in reading, as well as those who are very fond of reading. One of the decisive factors the teachers mention is family background: students from families with strong reading traditions will probably like to read, and students who are fond of reading in general will read in English as well. But the teachers express their concerns about the general lack of reading which they observe in the society today.

The teachers also mention an important factor which is another possible obstacle to reading – new types of communication media, competing for the attention of the younger generation. These new media, such as computers, computer games, mobile phones, the Internet, etc., give students the opportunity to experience stories in other ways than just reading them from beginning to end. This is not necessarily a negative influence, however, because students still use their English and creativity in general, and they get to know new things and discuss them.

On the other hand, Tea believes that the students tend to view reading literature in school as “boring”. One of the reasons is that students do not have enough time just to “experience the story”, as Nora puts it, because there are many terms and facts the teachers have to introduce along with the reading, for example, plot, characters, point of view, etc. Stig says that a practical motivation to learn English is there, but the main obstacle for his students is systematic reading and analysis of literary texts. Some of the teachers say that students actually are not familiar with ways of analyzing and discussing when they come to upper secondary school, which is why they often become frustrated if they are asked to do that. But this may be just another implication of the transitional period.

Having many unmotivated students in their classrooms makes the teachers view their task as one of motivating them, making them more interested in literature. It may also be necessary for the teachers to change their approach to teaching. First of all, the teachers often use themselves as examples, telling their students about their own reading experiences, and they believe that their example and enthusiasm might motivate some of the students. They also try to talk to students and ask them what type of stories they would like to read. Oliver thinks that his students are more motivated for reading texts about topics they are interested in, than if they knew beforehand that they had to read particular texts in order to get a good grade on the exam. He strongly believes that with weaker students he should start reading very easy stories; otherwise he will just “lose” them.

Some of the teachers do not see it as their task to get their students to like literature in general; they just want to motivate them to read a particular text during their lessons. To do so they try to introduce a text in an interesting way which can capture their students' interest. The variation of approaches to reading a text is also very important: students can read individually, or in pairs, or listen to a CD and follow the text in the textbook, or even just listen to it – they have to do things in different ways, otherwise they get bored. The very fact that students who say they have never read a book actually read a short story or a novel, gives them a sense of accomplishment and can be a type of motivation.

This, however, requires more time for preparation of the lessons. Leah says that a lot of things could have been done differently had she had more time for preparation, but teachers are very busy with other things, which is why they prefer to do things traditionally.

Generally, Leah touches upon a different issue, namely, the teachers' motivation to make literature interesting for students, and not just something compulsory, something they have to do. She is very honest about it and says that she is not sure whether she succeeds in motivating her students. Leah does not feel any encouragement from the management of the school, which does not provide teachers with any courses or orientation when it comes to literature:

We have to bring forward that kind of motivation in ourselves, in the limited space of time we have at our disposal. 'Cause, of course, from my education, I know the value of literature [...] But somehow it's drowned, I suppose, in the everyday kind of work we are doing here. Of course, we do have courses that are offered, you know, through the publishers, because they want to present different textbooks to us. But you know, basically speaking, that's it! Because the school does not offer anything, you know, we just have to motivate ourselves and be the ones motivating students.

Motivation is a very important factor in the English lessons: an inspired, motivated teacher will motivate his or her students, and vice versa. However, the teachers feel that motivating themselves and their students requires time, resources, a certain knowledge and encouragement from the school management.

5.2.7 Work with texts

In this part teachers mainly speak about work with short stories or novels, since these are the types of literary texts which are mostly presented in the textbooks. Occasionally they talk about poetry or drama and specific ways of working with these genres.

5.2.7.1 *Presentation of a new text*

The initial stage of working with a literary text is very important. Here the teachers have the opportunity to make students interested in reading and interacting with the text, which is why the teachers are very creative and vary their approaches. Variation is essential, because if students do the same thing over and over again, they will get bored, and lose interest.

The way the teachers introduce a text depends on what kind of text it is, its theme and author. If the author and his or her life are important to understanding the message of the text, then the teachers spend some time talking about it. Sometimes they do additional research about the author if they are unfamiliar with his or her life and work, or if they think that the textbook does not give enough information, and then give this information to their students in a lecture.

Some teachers try to get their students to find the information about the author themselves. Emma prefers to get students to do research and find information about particularly well-known authors. First students are asked to associate freely and say whether they have heard about this author before or read his or her books. Then they might be given 10-15 minutes to search on the Internet, cross-checking the information with at least two or three other websites in order to find out whether their sources are reliable. Then they share the information with each other and try to decide what is most distinctive and memorable about this particular author. Emma is sure that students remember the things they have actually worked on much better.

Another way of introducing a text is to talk about its theme: students are asked general questions about the subject matter. They can draw on their own experience, or talk about other books and stories with the same theme they might have read, or maybe they have watched a film which is relevant to the topic of discussion. First of all, this is great communication practice, and it is also a chance for students to express their opinion. At the

same time they become interested in reading the story and finding out what it has to say about the topic, and they are better prepared for reading and understanding it.

Tea talks about a technique she often uses when her students read short stories: they may read just a paragraph and then guess what is going to happen next, or what this story is about, etc. All this helps to build up curiosity to read on.

Other techniques may include students' creativity. Nora likes to study the title of a story with her students and talk about it. Then the students may be asked to draw a picture to visualize the title or the theme of the story and then proceed with reading. Not all the students like to show their creative side, and it depends on the class whether Nora will use this technique, but she believes that if she can make them visualize just a word from the title or the text itself, it might be motivating for them to find out whether what they have imagined and drawn is different from the contents of the text. Other ways of "visualizing" a text may be to use music which expresses the mood of a story, or find a picture which may have something to do with its theme – anything which can help Nora to capture her students' interest.

The teachers are well aware of the lack of interest in reading among their students, so they try to be creative and find different channels into literature, as Emma puts it. A variety of texts and approaches seems to be the key to success in arousing their students' interest in reading. Generally, the teachers use their students' personal response as a starting point – a kind of approach which can be applied to different aspects of classroom activities.

5.2.7.2 Reading a text

Reading a text is the most important part of the work with a text; its initial stage which is supposed to ensure that students will be able to work. The teachers talk about reading texts in general, and about reading a novel, because the latter differs from other classwork activities.

Two of the teachers – Stig and Tea – say that they mostly make their students read texts in class to ensure that everybody has actually read a story, because very often a number of students will not do it at home, and they will be "lost" during the next lesson. Tea admits, however, that she could have been stricter when it comes to homework. Oliver and Leah do not like to spend much time on reading in class – these teachers prefer their students to read

at home and then discuss and analyze the contents of the text in class. To ensure that all the students know what the story is about, Leah begins the work with listening to the text on CD. Emma and Nora say that their students can read both in class and at home, depending on whether the students have actually been introduced to the text and have done some pre-reading activities in class.

When it comes to novels, students usually have a month for reading. They are free to choose their own books, or the teacher can suggest a list of books they can choose from. Very often students prefer to choose a book from the school library to avoid paying for it. Those who choose their own books consult with their teachers, who want to make sure that this book is possible to read in a month and that the students will actually understand it.

The students read most of their novels at home. The teachers try to set aside some time during the lessons – about 15 minutes – when students can read in class and ask questions about their books, but this is an individual task. The teachers might check on the students' progress to see whether they actually read at home. Emma and Nora often use audio books to help their students get through a book.

Stig, who teaches the vocational studies stream, says that very often he has weak students who have difficulties reading a whole book. He groups these students and reads the books with them, sometimes even reading for them, which helps to make the whole experience feel like a kind of social occasion. This works as a means to motivate weak students to read, but at the same time they start to enjoy the situation if they are relaxed and do not feel any pressure.

5.2.7.3 Reading strategies

The textbooks contain guidelines about different reading strategies the students can use while reading different types of texts for different purposes. The teachers try to introduce these strategies to their students and practice them in classes, hoping that students will learn to vary their approaches to reading different texts and will improve their reading skills over time. However, all the teachers are convinced that students read all the texts the same way. Leah and Tea are not sure whether they remind their students about these reading strategies often enough. Leah says that she usually talks about them at the beginning of the term, without being consistent about it throughout the year. Oliver says that students are very

impatient and just want to read a text as quickly as possible. He also adds that some of these strategies might be too complicated for them to understand, and he cannot afford spending too much time on explaining them.

When it comes to reading for pleasure as a strategy, the teachers are very realistic about the fact that not all the students like to read. As has already been mentioned, the teachers try to motivate their students to read, asking them what they would like to read and finding interesting books, but in order to start enjoying literature students have to read on their own as well. To help them with this, the teachers suggest a set of books young people could read in their spare time, e.g. during holidays, but the problem is that this is not compulsory, and the teachers are sorry to acknowledge that very few would actually read these books.

However, this voluntary reading practice may help very weak students to expand their vocabulary and general understanding of English. Emma says that very often she offers “Easy Reader” books to her weaker students. She admits that it is hard to evaluate the effect of such reading on these students on a short term basis, and to conclude whether their English has actually improved, but at least they are exposed to more English than they would be otherwise.

Work with texts after reading them can be divided into oral and written activities.

5.2.7.4 Oral activities

One of the classical methods of working with texts is reading them aloud. Some of the implications of this method were discussed in Chapter 2, e.g. the students’ anxiety about their pronunciation, or the fact that only one student is working and the rest of the class is not.

The teachers say that their students do read aloud in the classroom, but only those students who want to read for the whole class. A lot of students have problems with reading aloud, mostly because they are insecure about their pronunciation. To solve this problem, the teachers ask them to read in groups of two or three, because students still need practice, they need to hear themselves. Reading in groups makes students feel comfortable. Besides, as Oliver points out, they can read more if they read in groups than if only one student is reading and the others are listening. Leah prefers her students to read aloud in the language laboratory, where she can listen to all the students individually and correct them if

necessary. Some students do not want to read even in small groups, in which case the teachers can take them out of the classroom and listen to them individually. Another way to make students feel more confident is to let them read the text for themselves first, so that they know it better, as Nora often does.

Reading aloud can be combined with translation of parts of the text. However, the teachers do not use this method very often. A word can be translated now and then, but not as a deliberate strategy. The teachers are more interested in whether their students actually understand the general meaning of what they read, and prefer to have them interpret texts using other English words. Emma says that translation is “a waste of time”, because this method is insufficient and does not help to develop the students’ strategic competence, when they are able to use other English words to explain the word they do not know. Stig can sometimes use translation when working with poems, because he is convinced that having translated a poem and actually understood it literally, students will understand its meaning better. Nora says that translation may be useful when working with grammar, like sentence structure or concord, because this way students can become more aware of differences between English and their mother tongue; otherwise there is not much use for this method.

Discussions of literary texts, another classic method of working with literature, is very popular among the teachers. Usually a discussion starts with questions from the teachers. These questions are always very open, not “yes/no” questions. According to the teachers, their students very seldom initiate discussions about literary texts. Stig says that it is actually difficult for young people to start such a conversation, and Oliver adds that his students are more interested in discussing everyday practical issues than talking about literature. However, all the teachers agree that if their students are genuinely interested and enthusiastic about what they read, this might trigger some kind of reaction and even an unplanned discussion can occur, or students can just start asking questions. Usually it is the strong students who are more active in such unplanned discussions, because they are more secure about their English. Nora says it is easier to create a situation where a discussion is possible if she takes a group of three-four students out of the classroom. Having discussions in the classroom, on the other hand, has its benefits, as Stig notes: students with a more “simplistic” approach to literature might actually learn something from them, because students are supposed to give sensible reasons for their liking or disliking the story. The personal response of their peers may trigger a reaction from students who are usually

reluctant to express their opinion. Stig adds that the type of reaction – positive or negative – does not matter; what matters is its argumentation.

One of the implications of discussions is that if they are genuinely interesting to the students, they might want to express their opinion no matter what and start speaking Norwegian. Hardly any of the teachers allow the students to speak their mother tongue, offering them help with the words they do not know or asking them to use other English words instead, aiming again at the development of strategic competence. Oliver can make some exceptions if the students' English is very poor, and for Leah it is important that students have an opportunity to speak their mind, even if they do it in Norwegian.

One of the types of oral activities which do not require so much of a personal response from students is the performance of literary texts. The teachers seem to be very cautious about using this kind of activity, which again has something to do with students' insecurity and even fear, not only of speaking English, but also of performing in English in front of the whole class. Stig, Oliver and Leah either do not use performance as a method or use it very rarely, because they are not sure if it works. Emma does not use performance as a method deliberately, but rather gives her students an option of how they want to present something which they have been working on. Tea and Nora like to practice this activity and say that some students may even like to perform and they are not as shy as when they have to read. They do not use it very often, however; just once or twice a year, because performance requires time to prepare and students may just get bored if they do it too often.

Another way of working with literature without putting too much pressure on the students is to play games and engage them in other fun activities. However, this type of activities is not so popular among the teachers: Stig, Tea and Leah do not use games during the lesson because they believe this is not something they should spend their time on. Stig calls himself unskilled in using games as a method. Oliver, Emma and Nora use games sometimes, but these games are rarely based on the knowledge of literary texts. It can be "Bingo" or "Hangman" to drill vocabulary, or various quizzes for students to assess themselves before a test, or warm-up activities at the beginning of the lesson, like playing with words just to get students started and engaged.

When it comes to the language of literary texts, the teachers do not spend much time on analyzing and explaining its differences from a common register. Partially because they

think this is a rather advanced method of working with literature and only the strongest students can grasp it, partially because they do not have much time to spend on linguistic analysis, and partially because their students are not so interested in this, even if the teachers attempt to draw their attention to particularly interesting examples of stylistic devices, usually with regards to poetry. The students do not as a rule ask questions about literary language.

5.2.7.5 Written production

Writing a text can be a challenging task because it requires either using one's own creativity or the reworking of secondary sources. The textbooks usually have suggestions as to how to structure a written text, or how to carry out a project and present its findings. The textbooks also tell you how to present sources.

Written production is usually associated with the final stage of some kind of work students are set to fulfill: to analyze a book or a film, or to carry out a project. One of the major writing tasks all students have to do is the analysis of a novel. The teachers say that the students are supposed to say something about plot, characters and theme, and write a short summary of the text. It is a plus if they can refer to the text and argue their point of view by quoting something from the original text, but this is not obligatory. The students also have to be able to put literature into context, for example the historical period or the life of the author. They can also refer to secondary sources, but they have to refer to them correctly.

In fact, the teachers do not talk as much about writing as they do about oral activities. There may be two reasons for this: the first one is the fact that students have to develop their communicative competence, which seems to be interpreted mainly as teaching students how to speak. Leah says that the students who come to upper secondary school seem to be better prepared for oral activities, which she thinks are the main focus of the lower secondary school. When it comes to writing, she experiences that students are not well trained to write structured texts, not to mention such kinds of written production as essays or articles. But she adds that this is probably how it is meant to be, because students cannot learn everything in lower secondary school.

Another possible reason can be time: students need enough time and resources to write any kind of text, which means that much of the classroom time will be spent on one kind of

activity. The students could write at home, but they may be tempted to plagiarize. And having them writing in class guarantees that all students will hand in their texts on time. The teachers need time to read their products and give feedback. This is why, I think, different kinds of oral activities are more effective when it comes to testing the students' knowledge. The teachers may also give their students an option of how they want to be assessed, where they can choose between oral or written activities.

This is not to say that the students do not write at all. Emma says that among the written tasks her students get, are: a summary of the text, a low-level literary analysis or writing for a specific purpose, for example, to describe a main character of the story. Nora usually uses the textbook's suggestions for writing activities, which she finds very interesting, for example a task where students are asked to pretend to be one of the main characters and write a diary about his or her life.

When it comes to other writing activities, which usually require creative thinking from students, the teachers do not use them very often. Emma says that she gives her students tasks in which they can use their creativity, but these tasks are not obligatory, and students can choose something else instead. Creativity in itself does not affect the grade, because it is not mentioned among the aims of the curriculum. She also adds that she does not interpret the curriculum in such a way that it requires that students write creatively. Tea tries to vary the kinds of written production tasks she sets, and her students have written alternative endings or pre-stories of literary texts, and she thinks her students enjoyed it. The reason why she does not use these techniques more often is time.

There are other types of writing tasks which involve using the Internet, like on-line blogging or discussing things in chat rooms, but for some students the problem is that the school does not provide them with personal computers, and the teachers cannot expect all the students to have computers at home. On the other hand, the teachers say that the situation is going to change after a while, when all the students will get computers.

As with other aspects of teaching literature, the two aspects – time and resources available – seem to affect the work of both teachers and students. These may be the reasons for the more traditional character of the writing tasks.

5.2.7.6 Other activities – reworking of secondary literature or other sources of information

During the English course the students are supposed to learn and are actually encouraged to use different sources of information, like encyclopedias, newspaper or magazine articles, or the Internet, which can explore the life of well-known writers, or contain scholarly facts or even established opinions on literary works. As regards secondary literature, it seems more appropriate to work with it on a more advanced level than upper secondary school, but the possibility should not be excluded.

Five of the teachers I interviewed agree that the most popular source of information for their students is the Internet, and the Wikipedia web-site in particular. The teachers try to encourage them to use other sources, for example, other encyclopedias, but with personal computers at their students' hand, their attempts seem to be in vain. Another reason is that the libraries, in fact, do not have so many books, as Oliver reveals.

The very fact that students mostly use the Internet to find additional information is not problematic as long as they list their sources correctly. The main problem is plagiarism: an abundance of all kinds of information available on the Internet can be very tempting for students to use as their own thoughts and ideas. However, the teachers have the technology to check students' works for plagiarism, and if they are caught at plagiarism, they will simply fail according to the official policy of the school, which is why Nora is convinced that the students learn how to use the Internet properly. The other teachers are not so optimistic, and say that they really struggle with getting students to use and list their sources correctly.

Plagiarism is the reason why Leah does not like the idea of a written report about a novel the students are supposed to read. She says that now when not only academic texts and literary analyses are available on the Internet, but other students' works as well, writing reports, especially at home is no longer a possibility. Tea, on the other hand, would like her students to use the Internet more, but since the school does not provide them with computers, she cannot expect them to have computers at home and use the Internet there. The presence or absence of a computer again seems to make a difference in the teachers' and students' work.

5.2.7.7 *What do students have to know?*

Depending on the approach a teacher decides to adopt, students have to learn different things, ranging from just a basic plot of the text, to received opinions about the acknowledged works of literature.

The aims in the curriculum state that students have to be able to analyse and discuss a film and a representative selection of literary texts in English from the genres poetry, short story, novel and drama, and prepare and assess their own written or oral texts inspired by literature and art. The teachers are actually the ones who decide for themselves what their students have to learn and remember after they have read a literary text.

The elements which students work on the most are the plot, setting, characters, theme and point of view of a literary text. As has already been mentioned, very often the teachers also provide them with additional information about the author and his life, or a historical period. However, it turns out that students are not supposed to memorize all these things. The teachers say that they decide what they think it is necessary for their students to remember.

Emma says that the curriculum does not say that students have to memorize all these things. They have to do a low-level analysis during the course where they can say a little bit about characters, a theme or setting. In general, the teachers decide what has to be remembered: the plots of some literary texts; and if a historical period or the life of an author is important for the message of the text, then it *might* be important to remember *something* about it. The grounds for their decision depend on the writer and the importance of the text, so that students have some idea about different periods and big names in literature.

Nora says that she sees her primary goal as letting students read and experience stories, and they do not have to remember everything about that text and its author. She does not want to overwhelm them with literary terms and factual information, because having the same pattern of work with every literary text is very tiresome for them. Leah, on the other hand, thinks that her aim is that her students know the basic plot of every text they read, because this could be the task for the oral exam. The tasks for the oral exam are decided on the local level, and there, says Leah, the teachers have control. In fact, two teachers – Emma and Leah – say that their students often choose literature for their oral exams. This does not mean that they are not supposed to work on anything else than literature, but if they can choose between four or five topics, they always pick literature. Emma again explains this in terms of

actual work her students have had with literary texts: she does not demand this, but at the end of the year what students remember the best is a good story they have read and worked with. She also adds that she has had students who wanted more poetry in their oral exams.

The open character of the curriculum and its aims also gives the teachers freedom to decide what to demand from their students with regards to literature, since there are no concrete references otherwise. The importance of the author or the text itself seems to determine how deeply students are going to study it.

5.2.8 Literary competence

Studying literature aims to a greater or lesser extent at developing literary competence (see Ch. 2), which eventually helps students to read and understand any literary text. In order to be able to discuss literary texts students also have to acquire a certain terminology.

The teachers are generally not sure about how much weight the present curriculum puts on literary competence. Nora does not think that the curriculum says a lot about literary competence. Tea concludes that there is not so much space for developing literary competence, because according to the curriculum, literature is more a means of learning culture than a subject in its own right. The main focus of EFL teaching is not solely on the language, but also on culture and society, and literature is just another means to teach that. Emma does not answer the question directly and talks about literature in general. She says that the curriculum lets her be flexible as to how much time she wants to spend on literature. A lot depends on how a teacher uses literature: to talk about grammar, to learn about other people's culture and way of life, etc.

Leah says that teachers have to find space for literary competence themselves. When reading literary texts with her students she systematically works on terms like plot, setting, characters, etc., but she prefers to focus on one particular element in relation to one particular text, because she believes it could be boring to do this the same way every time.

Regarding the different study streams, Oliver is sure that there is more space for developing literary competence in the general studies, because vocational students have to read professional texts as well. And in general, Oliver is very skeptical toward literary competence for vocational students and says that to teach it he has to take time from

teaching more practical things. His conclusion is: “I think maybe that’s one of the things that we don’t need so much in the vocational classes”. Stig, on the other hand, who also teaches vocational classes, says that he would like to have more time for reading and discussing literary texts. However, he sees limitations to that because these students have to read a fair amount of professional texts as well. At the same time, he says that he is free to expand time on developing literary competence by choosing other texts.

Without concrete references, the teachers themselves determine how much time they would like to devote to developing literary competence. The amount of time will vary from teacher to teacher and from one study stream to another. Some teachers would like to have more time for reading and discussing literary texts, others would prefer to concentrate on other things which are clearly stated by the curriculum. Generally, the teachers say that the present curriculum allows them to be rather flexible in this respect.

6. Discussion

6.1 Looking back

The aim of my project was to find out how English language literature was dealt with in upper secondary school. I wanted to find out about the way the teachers and their students work with literary texts. I was also interested in the literary aspect of reading: reading not only in terms of gaining information, but also in terms of personal growth and pleasure. English is an obligatory subject in upper secondary school, which is why students have to study it. But at the same time it might be enjoyable as well when it comes to literature, and I wanted to find out how teachers explore this aspect.

I had some ideas about EFL teaching in Norway because during my study I looked at the English subject curriculum. The curriculum acknowledges the importance of literature, naming it among the three main areas of the subject. The model of a foreign curriculum, suggested by Chaves Tesser (see Ch. 1), includes literature and culture as integral and interdependent parts of the course. The Norwegian English subject curriculum contains all the elements, but they are not equally important. There are three main subject areas in the national curriculum: language learning, communication and culture, and society and literature. This division is understandable in the light of the communicative approach to EFL teaching in Norway: the most important thing is to *learn* English in order to be able to *communicate*. Since English is not a literary subject, the function of literature then is to provide the students with examples of English in use, and with insight into both the culture and the society of English speaking countries.

The curriculum does not suggest any syllabus, which is why I supposed that examination questions could not be based on a syllabus, and should therefore be very open so that all the students could answer them. My assumptions were:

1. The teachers have to come up with their own syllabi or they have to rely on the textbooks.

2. The students do not read the same literary texts, therefore questions about literature are not obligatory in the final exam. What is the students' motivation to read in this case?

My findings corroborated my initial assumptions and revealed other aspects of teaching literature in EFL in Norway.

6.2 Literature in the curriculum: potential and problems

Literature has gained more importance and place in the EFL teaching, according to the teachers. They appreciate this fact and see all the benefits literature can give both to the EFL teaching, and to the general education of their students. All the teachers have very passionate relations to literature which they would like to convey to their students. At the same time English language literature is viewed first and foremost as an aid in the EFL teaching. The current curriculum acknowledges the importance of literature, but its main function is to give students examples of English in use and to give them ideas about culture and the way of life in the English-speaking world.

All the teachers praise the openness of the new curriculum, because it allows them the flexibility to pick and choose the methods and texts they would like to use, making sure that they are appropriate for the level of their students. But I think that the openness of the curriculum also means that teachers need to have extensive knowledge of the subject to be able to make concrete decisions as to what to teach, and how to organize the process of EFL teaching in a classroom in order to help their students achieve the competence aims of the curriculum.

It is interesting to note that the same openness of the curriculum can become an apple of discord among the teachers, who have to agree on how they interpret the document, since its nature opens for many, often conflicting views. It seems to be difficult to reach a consensus when different views can be equally supported by the curriculum. Within one school there can be several different interpretations, which is not a bad thing in itself, but leaves teachers with a lot of the responsibility for deciding what to teach and what methods to use.

Some of the teachers would like to have more concrete references as to what their students have to learn, because the competence aims of the subject curriculum are too "vague": the

curriculum only gives the teachers general guidelines as to what their students are expected to be able to do during the English course. In view of the absence of more concrete references in the curriculum, the teachers seem to turn to the textbooks which they prefer to follow rather closely, because they are written according to the curriculum and by qualified writers whose choices the teachers usually trust.

As has already been mentioned, all the teachers enjoy the flexibility which the new curriculum gives them. They say they are free to choose what they want to teach and how they would like to do it. Still, some of the teachers feel that they have to “cover” a lot of material, by which I infer that they mean textbook material. The curriculum is the same for both study streams – general and vocational, but the fact that the teachers use textbooks which are written for different study programs may affect their choices as to what to include in the content of each specific course.

I would like to note that I sometimes felt that the teachers who teach vocational programs tried to defend vocational students as if they were not treated fairly by the curriculum in comparison with the general studies students. The teachers say that a lot of students in their vocational classes do not have enough knowledge of English to cope with the competence aims of the new curriculum. The teachers also express their concern with the orientation of the English course towards general competence, as they think their vocational students need their English course to be more practical and more oriented towards their chosen vocation. However, the curriculum is the same, which means that students will have to take the same exam. I agree with the teachers that the possibility of an optional vocational exam may be a solution, because then vocational students can choose what type of exam they would like to take.

I would see some of the interpretation problems the teachers talk about as connected to the transitional period from Reform 94 to the Knowledge Promotion. I think both teachers and students need some time to adjust to the LK06 curriculum. In an attempt to make the competence aims more relevant for different study programs, the Ministry of Education has suggested a revision of the English subject curriculum where the aims are adjusted so that they specify texts and vocabulary related to the students’ study program (Utdanningsderiktoratet, 2010). I believe that once implemented, these amendments may resolve the differences between the two studies streams.

6.3 Reading and understanding literature

The curriculum specifies that students are supposed to read literary texts of different genres – short story, novel, drama and poetry. The textbooks present all these genres, but the short story dominates the contents of the textbooks. The teachers say that short stories are very convenient for classroom practice, since it is possible to read, discuss and work with them during a lesson. The textbooks focus on the understanding of literature to a certain extent, but literature seems to be a tool for developing the linguistic competence of the students.

What I find especially important is that the textbooks present the students with different reading strategies, because I believe it may help them to cope with a large amount of texts to read. They become aware that different tasks require different strategies, but being aware of these strategies is not enough, they have to be practised. The teachers say they feel that their students read all the texts the same way, but at the same time the teachers do not seem to be consistent in practising reading strategies with their students. Hellekjær (2009) suggests that already before the seventh grade students have to be taught how to read according to the purpose of reading.

When it comes to the problem of reading in general, the teachers had to generalize to express their opinion of how much their students read. One of the teachers told me that he did not like the fact that he had to generalize in order to answer my questions, because all the students are different. In fact, all the teachers told me that they had students with a varying degree of both knowledge of English and general knowledge, which made it difficult for them to answer questions regarding, for example, whether their students like to read. But on the whole, their impression is that young people read less than, for example, five or ten years ago. At the same time, not all the teachers believe those students who say that they have never read a book in their lives. According to research about the reading habits of Norwegian children (see Ch. 1), young people read all the time, but they are not always aware of the fact that reading other types of texts than “fine” literature also counts as reading. I think students should be informed that they are constantly reading, even, for example, on the Internet, because here I see a potential for practicing reading strategies: we read differently according to the purpose of our reading.

I also believe that in order to succeed in improving students’ reading skills, reading strategies should be practiced from the early stages of schooling. In fact, Norwegian and

English teachers could cooperate in this aspect of teaching. Research can be done in order to explore the potential for such cooperation.

6.4 Motivating students to read

As for reading literature in the English lessons, the teachers try to make the whole process more exciting for their students. The teachers acknowledge that they have many unmotivated students in their classrooms. They say that the general lack of interest in reading in the society may be the cause for this. In fact, one of my main concerns before embarking on this project was whether literature was appreciated as a value in itself by teachers and students. I think that teaching literature depends very much on the personality of the teachers: if they are enthusiastic readers themselves, they will try to motivate their students to read as well. It turns out that the teachers I interviewed are passionate readers, who would love to convey their passion for literature to their students. They also try to stay realistic, because not all the students are equally interested in reading. Moreover, I think it is late to start with the appreciation of literature at upper secondary level; it has to be begun at the very beginning of schooling. LK06 has been acclaimed for emphasizing the succession and progress between the different school levels, which is why I think the task of “promoting” literature cannot be placed only with the teachers of upper secondary school. They have to pick up the baton from the teachers of the previous levels. Maybe it would be a good idea to arrange meetings between teachers of different grades, so that they can share their experience with each other; something which can help both the students and the teachers.

Among other reasons why young people are not so interested in reading, the teachers name new technologies which offer other ways of communicating and experiencing stories. It is reasonable to suggest using new technology in work with literature, e.g. on-line blogs or a chat-room where students can discuss literary texts, which may encourage the students to take part in this kind of discussion. One of the problems the teachers may experience here is that not all the students are provided with computers.

Otherwise, the teachers try to motivate their students by asking them what they would like to read to ensure that the themes of the texts are interesting to them, which means that the teachers try to work in collaboration with their students. Having a common syllabus would limit this collaboration in such a way that the students could feel that they are not listened to.

The teachers are interested in their students' opinions. The question of high-brow or low-brow literature is not so important: the desire to read is at stake, and the teachers are trying to do their best to get their students into reading any kind of literature, any kinds of texts.

The teachers see the variation of literary texts and types of work their students do as decisive when it comes to teaching literature. The teachers are very creative in the way they introduce literary texts to their students: they draw on the general knowledge of the students or on their experience, trying to make them more interested in a text.

6.5 Classroom work with literature

I got the impression that both the teachers and their students prefer to work orally, discussing literary texts, answering the teachers' questions or the questions from the textbooks. I prefer to explain this fact in connection with the overall aim of EFL teaching in Norway – to be able to communicate in English (see Ch. 2). This can be the reason for the teachers' enthusiasm towards literature: it is a very good starting point for conversation. After having read something interesting and exciting, it is easier to get students, even the weaker ones, to talk, because they are not expected to discuss literature in an academic manner. They are encouraged to give their personal response and to draw on their personal experience when discussing literary texts. This way students may feel that what is going on in their English classroom is relevant to their lives. The teachers believe that listening to and encouraging their students to give personal responses about literature is the best way to motivate young people to read. This is why, I believe, the teachers do not like the idea of a common syllabus; it would limit their freedom of choice and their ability to motivate students to read. Some of the teachers expressed the opinion that having a common frame of reference for all teachers could secure the quality of teaching and the students' knowledge of the subject, but in general the teachers prefer to decide themselves what their students will read.

6.6 Approaches to teaching literature

It is difficult to single out one approach to English language literature teaching which has been adopted in the current curriculum and by the teachers I have interviewed. I prefer to

think that a combination of approaches is used. My analysis of the teachers' methods of working with literature shows that they mostly adopt a language-based approach: the work with literary texts aims primarily at the development of the students' knowledge of English. Literary texts are seen as a starting point for discussions and other types of oral and written activities. However, less attention is paid to the language of the literary texts, because the teachers believe there is not enough time for that. Another possible reason is that the students are either not interested in the characteristics of literary language, or lack the skills and ability to analyze a literary text stylistically.

The main content of English as a school subject in Norway is first and foremost the English language and people who speak English. Literature is seen as a means of acquiring the language. However, the students receive background information about literary texts which the teachers believe is relevant and important for understanding a particular literary text. The students are also provided with basic literary terms, like plot, setting, characters, etc., which they have to be acquainted with in order to analyze literary texts, as is required by the curriculum. But literary competence in itself is not a competence aim, which is why students are not required to remember all literary terms and all background information about literary texts. The amount of information to be remembered is decided by the individual teacher. Literary competence is something which students can acquire by being exposed to literary texts. However, some of the teachers see it as their task to also develop the students' literary competence to a greater or a lesser extent, depending on how they interpret the curriculum.

Although the curriculum for upper secondary school cannot be compared to the programs of literary courses at a college or university, it seems reasonable to provide students with some essential literary terms. Here, I think, lies a possibility of closer interdisciplinary ties between the subjects of Norwegian and English.

At the same time, literature is also used for its potential for personal enrichment: the students are asked to draw on their personal experiences and give their responses while reading literary texts. Their responses, oral and written, give the teachers an idea about the effect of literary texts on their students. The teachers try to encourage students' reading by suggesting texts which might be interesting to them, but not all the students are equally interested in reading in general. This is the reason why this approach is not used to its full extent, although it has the potential of winning more students. It is mostly used when choosing,

reading and discussing a novel, which for some students seems to be both an endeavor and accomplishment in itself, because they might gain new experience. Another obstacle is that the students become highly dependent on their teacher, who just does not have enough time to spend on explaining and interpreting literary texts. The aesthetic side of reading literature is not so important, although the teachers have a close personal attachment to literature. They would like to have more time to deal with literary texts, but the necessity to cover other aspects of the subject limits the amount of time they can spend on it.

Time is the major problem for all the teachers I have interviewed. Some teachers think they would have done their work better and more efficiently had they had more time. From my interviews I got the impression that the teachers are genuinely interested in teaching their students to love literature, but again the teachers feel that they have to teach so many things that there is not much time for literature. One of the interviewees mentioned the teachers' own motivation for making literature more interesting to their students. The lack of time and maybe encouragement from the school management seems to affect the teachers' work in terms of teaching literature. Future research may show how teachers try to find a solution in order to facilitate the role of English language literature in the overall process of EFL teaching.

7. Summary and conclusions

The following is a summary of the main findings of my thesis, organized in a list of 14 items:

- English language literature is an integral part of the EFL teaching in Norway. Literature is used mainly for practical reasons, and its main function is to give students examples of the English usage and insights into other people's culture and way of life.
- English language, not literature, constitutes the content of the course, but in the new curriculum literature has gained more importance compared to the previous curriculum.
- There is no focus on the history of literature and its periods, except that the curriculum mentions that students are supposed to read literature from the 1500s to present days. The students are not expected to read prescribed and fixed sets of books and literary criticism related to them. On the contrary, there is an emphasis on the students' personal response, which they are supposed to express in discussions and analyses of literary texts. Literature is thus used as a basis for various classroom activities aimed at the development of linguistic and cultural competence.
- The openness of the new curriculum is the reason for its various interpretations, which may lead to conflicting situations when the teachers have to decide what textbook they will use. When it comes to the approaches to literature teaching, the teachers decide for themselves what methods they will use.
- The open character of the curriculum is also the reason for the open and general character of the exam questions. Some teachers are very pleased with this, because open exam questions make it possible for every student to answer them. The other teachers are not sure whether the exams test their students' knowledge of the subject in general, not just of the English language.
- The curriculum does not suggest a syllabus for use in schools. It mentions that the students have to read texts of different genres, including short stories, poems, drama and novels. The teachers therefore prefer to use the textbook as a basis for their literature teaching.

- The literary genre which dominates the textbooks is the short story. This may be explained in terms of practicality: short stories can be read in one sitting, there are not so many characters in them, and the plot is easy to remember. Other literary genres are also presented in the textbooks in order to ensure variation in the students' work.
- The teachers do not like the idea of a common syllabus, since they believe they will be limited in their freedom to choose what they would like to do. They also say that with a common syllabus they would only have to teach what is supposed to be on the exam, which is also limiting.
- The teachers say that motivating their students to read is one of the most important tasks they face, since many of them experience that the young people do not like to read. In order to motivate their students, the teachers try to work in collaboration with them, discussing together what to read and how to work. The teachers may also try to suggest different books which their weaker students can read in their spare time, in order to increase their exposure to English. The teachers say not many students actually do that.
- The teachers prefer more traditional ways of dealing with literary texts, which mainly includes reading and discussing them, and then doing exercises related to the texts. The oral activities are often more preferable both for the teachers and the students.
- There is not so much space for literary competence in the English subject curriculum, which is also reflected in the textbooks. The teachers try to develop their students' literary competence along with communicative and linguistic competence, but this is not the main focus of their work.
- Almost all the teachers feel that they do not have time to deal with literature properly, citing the necessity to deal with many other topics of the subject. In spite of the fact that there is more focus on literature in LK06 than in R-94, some of the teachers feel that the amount of time they can spend on teaching literature has not changed.
- The teachers decide what their students have to know and remember in terms of literature, since the curriculum does not specify how much literary competence the students are supposed to obtain during the course.

- English language literature is a means to an end in EFL teaching, since it is not the main content of the course.

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*Appendix 1: Interview guide***Interview guide****In general**

1. How long is your teaching experience?
2. How much literature did you study?
3. What streams do you teach?
4. What does literature mean for you
5. Do you think it is important to teach English language literature at the upper secondary school? What is the main function of literature then?
6. Can literature be communicative?
7. How important is the aesthetic value of literature?

Curriculum, textbooks and texts

8. What are the main challenges for the English teachers after the implementation of the Knowledge Promotion (especially with regards to literature)? How is literature presented in the curriculum? Does it lack anything in this respect?
9. How closely do you follow the textbook?
10. Do you consider literary texts provided by the textbooks well-balanced in terms of presenting all genres? Is English language literature presented differently in the textbooks for different programs?
11. How do you think, which genre suits the needs and interests of your students best? Do you feel that there are particular texts which your students seem to like more comparing to other texts?
12. Do you like the idea of the common syllabus for the whole country? Why?
13. What are the main advantages and disadvantages of the exam questions which are not based on the common syllabus?
14. If you present a new text into the syllabus, what are the reasons for your choice?

Motivation

15. How important is the motivation on the lessons of English?

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16. Do your students need any extra motivation or is the single motivation for reading literature in order to obtain a good grade after the exam enough?
 17. How does the lack of interest to reading in general affect your students` willingness to read the English language literature? Why don`t the students like to read?
 18. What do you think you can do in order to promoter reading?

Work with texts

19. How do you usually present a new text?
20. Do your students usually read texts **at home or in class**?
21. They are supposed to be acquainted with the main **reading strategies**. Do they use them?
22. Do they often **read aloud** during the lessons? Do they like it?
23. How often do **they translate texts from English to Norwegian and vice versa**?
24. Do you practice classroom **performance of the literary texts**?
25. Do your students have to learn the **basic plot of the text**? Do they have to memorize any **facts** given by you or the textbook (something about literary text, e.g. historical or factual information about the texts or about their author`s lives)? Why?
26. Who inspires the **discussions** of what has been read more often: you or your students?
27. Do your students like **games** during the lesson?
28. Do your students often ask questions about **the language of the literary texts**? Do you explain the main differences between common and literary use of the English language to them? If you encounter a very interesting example of any means of expression, would you take some time to explain its function in the text?
29. How much space is there for **literary competence** in the English classroom? How much space would you like to have?
30. Textbooks suggest using **other sources of information for students` project work**. Which sources do your students use more often?
31. Do you use **audio books** to help your students to “get through” the text? Why?
32. **Voluntary reading** – is it possible?

Appendix 2: Example of transcription with highlights and comments

I – the interviewer

T5 – Nora

I: How important is **the aesthetic value** of literature at this level?

T5: I think that it is important. Because **if the students are given the opportunity to actually feel something** when they read something, then they'll probably be **more interested in the texts**. If it's possible. Depends on the story, I guess, or the plot, or... yeah... But I think it's **important for them to feel something**, but it shouldn't be something that every student has to do, because then they will feel pressured to have some opinion of something that they are not interested in. So, I think **they need to be engaged when they read, and if they get any feelings at all, I think that's just great**.

I: Yeah, Great. Let's talk about the present curriculum and maybe a little bit about the previous one as well. What are the main challenges for the teacher after the implementation of the Knowledge promotion?

T5: Ok. Um... I think the challenge is that **we are supposed to go through so many things** so it's hard to... um... work with so many... with... um... come through all **the things that we actually must teach**. And because literature is really one part, and then you have like things students have to know about society, and then you have culture - there are so many things that we need to cover, so **it's hard to have time for everything**, so...

I: Do you mean time is the main problem?

T5: Yeah, exactly.

I: Ok, but with regard to literature, how do you feel, what are the main challenges there?

T5: I think that's the same thing - **we don't have much time**. And, um... The books that we use, they try to introduce new writers - all writers that are important in a few lines - and that's it! We don't have enough time to really deal with... with the writer or the text because you need to move on to another topic. I think time is difficult in that perspective as well.

Comments:

- Aesthetic value: "It is important to have feelings about what you read".
- Challenge: too much to cover.
- Time is a problem.

Appendix 3: Example of data reduction table

	Aesthetic dimension of literature	Challenges of K-06
Stig	“Something that will come later”. To start to enjoy literature one has to have read a lot	Doesn’t talk about the challenges, but mentions that students are very weak (IOP)
Oliver	Not of a high priority. Says that teachers have to be very careful picking books: themes and language don’t have to be very difficult.	The formal part of the curriculum: grammar terms, books analysis, correct listing of sources. English is not a priority for voc. students. Too much “general English. Two exams to choose between
Emma	There is some place for that in the present curriculum. It is important at this level, because dealing with literary texts gives students something new, smth. they have never done before, because many of them don’t read much.	Main challenges have nothing to do with literature. More problems are related to what is expected of students language wise. Explains present moments in terms of a transitional period .
Tea	Prefers to speak about the aesthetic dimension of literature with regard to poetry.	The biggest challenge is that students are required to understand why the language is used they it is used – they have to be able to operate with grammar terms – students are not prepared. Literature is not a challenge.
Nora	It is important: having feelings about what you read is important. If students feel something when they read, they will probably be more interested in a story. Being interested is important, because then you will have an opinion on the story	The main challenge is the amount of the material teachers and students have to go through, and literature is just a part of the whole. TIME (need to cover so many things has its consequences in the textbooks: “important” writers are presented in just a few lines. “Conservative” when it comes to literature: quote!!!).
Leah	It is important. Literature is not appreciated by the Norwegian students as a value in itself; however, Leah isn’t sure whether she succeeds in “communicating” this value. TIME + no encouragement for development from the school management. Teachers have to bring forward this kind of motivation in themselves in the limited space of time they have in their disposal. Feels “ drowned ”	Making literature interesting for students. Including texts that are interesting for both sexes. Coming up with topics that might inspire the younger generation. The curriculum is too vague, so that every teacher interprets it his/her way. This reflects in the exam questions.